

# **The Tim Ferriss Show Transcripts**

## **Episode 124: Jamie Foxx**

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Tim Ferriss: Jamie, welcome to the show.

Jamie Foxx: Man, thanks buddy.

Tim Ferriss: I am so excited to be here. I'm admiring your setup, here.

Jamie Foxx: Crazy, right?

Tim Ferriss: This is where the magic happens.

Jamie Foxx: To be honest with you, a lot of magic happens here. For the people that are listening, we are actually in my studio, my home studios. Studios – we're talking about tech world. Studios, because of tech world, a lot of them dissipated in closed doors. Because if you think about when LMFAO came around, they didn't need studios. They did all of their music on a laptop, flying from here to Germany or whatever like that and just dumped it onto – just pressed up the CD or the iTunes.

So studios have almost become obsolete. But there's something very interesting about this studio. First, just for people that are listening, this studio – and I'll describe it – it's sort of plush, the carpet's great, we can sit next to a grand piano.

You hear the grand piano? [Plays piano] So we keep a grand piano around just to make sure we don't get too techy. But what's interesting about it is, it's actually electric. But it's an electric grand piano so we still have the wood to give you that warm sound. I think it makes a lot of sense because as music starts to progress, because of the way we record now, sometimes you lose a little bit of the heart of it. So I think within the next 20, 30, 40, 50 years it'll be this type of music, the real sound will remain, if that makes sense.

The studio, when I first got the house, looked like an old porn set. It had like an old basement carpet, and a couch, and metallic upholstery. And I was like, what would I do with this, because I needed a place to work and do music.

What's interesting now, I got a guy to change the whole place over. And as you can see – we'll take pictures and show it for you guys that are listening. They did a very good job. If you look over here, this is where we do the recording. There's a booth, which is normal. But also they're recording on both sides. We're able to do animation. If we want to do ADR for movies –

Tim Ferriss: What is ADR?

Jamie Foxx: ADR is when we're doing a movie but we're recording the movie outside where there's a lot of noise...

Tim Ferriss: Oh, you're doing pickup audio.

Jamie Foxx: So we'll do pickup audio. And most any actor or actress will tell you ADR is the worst thing in the world to do. So to be able to have it here, I can do my ADR here, I can do my animation here and things like that. The studio itself, the actual brains of the studio, it's an old hard drive. And the reason I kept that old hard drive, I used to have a smaller studio in a smaller house.

But when I had that small studio, I wasn't in music. I built the studio in my smaller house because I wanted to get into music. But I was from comedy and acting and things like that. But what I would do is I would throw parties. And I would invite musical people over at the party. When they would come over, if I had Puff or Snoop or back at that time, John B or Bryan McKnight, I would say, "Hey, man, I'm trying to get into music; would you leave me some music in my studio?" So people would leave me like 16 bars, 24 bars.

Tim Ferriss: Thinking they would record something while they're in the studio?

Jamie Foxx: Yeah. They would record. We'd have the party going and I'd say, hey, man, let's go in the back. You know, while we're drinking or whatever. We'd go in and I'd say, "Hey, man, just leave me a little something," because I was trying to get into music. And then I met this kid named Briam Prescott. We played basketball – pickup basketball games. He said, "Hey, man, why don't you ever do music?" I said, "Man, I'm trying to get into that shit, man. I don't know how to get into it." And then one day I threw this big party.

The party was crazy because – I digress a little bit. I would follow Puffy Combs around, back in the day when it was just like Puff and J. Lo. Back at that time, no one could get into his parties but the reason he would let me in is because I would carry a camera

with me everywhere I go. But it was back in the day, day. You know, like the big Cannon cameras.

Tim Ferriss: Wait, he would let you in because you carried a camera?

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, because at that time I wasn't Jamie Foxx; I was just Jamie Foxx. And so I couldn't get into all the parties because Puff was so big. When he came to LA, we couldn't even get into our own clubs. But I took a town car everywhere he went, jumped out of the town car one day and said, "Yo, Puff, can I record?"

Tim Ferriss: Now, at that point, he didn't know you at all? Or he did?

Jamie Foxx: He knew me. He knew the kid that was on *In Living Color*, whatever like that but it wasn't elevated. And plus, he was having parties that were, like, huge; like nobody's getting in. And so he saw me with the camera. He's like, "Yo, let him through." And it was back in the day. It was like the big Cannon camera with the light and I had to change the battery.

It wasn't like today, you've just got your phone in your pocket. No, I had production. But I would follow him around. And then one day, we had this party in Philly that I recorded for him. And he said, "Yo, money, you know how much this party cost?" I said what? He said, "It cost a million dollars for this party." I said, "You paid a million dollars for a party?" He was like, yeah. I told Puff, I challenged him. I said, "I'll throw you a party at my house in LA, which is way smaller than this situation but I'll spend maybe \$400 and it will rival this party. Not in the scale of it but in the type of people that are there." And he was a little upset. You know, Puff is – he always likes to win.

Tim Ferriss: The competitive guy.

Jamie Foxx: He's a competitive guy. "You must be outta your motherfucking mind, playboy. You gotta understand the essence of this party." And I was like, all right, I get it. And he actually came to LA a few weeks later. It was a Saturday. He said, "Yo, Playboy, make that shit happen." So he calls me like 9 in the morning, right?

Tim Ferriss: For that night?

Jamie Foxx: In the morning.

Tim Ferriss: For the same day.

Jamie Foxx: For the day. I said no problem.

So I go into my cell phones. I have a list of people that since I first came to LA, the way I got into knowing everybody – I was the first social media guy without social media. I would go do a standup comedy routine at a club. If they liked the routine, I had cue cards back in the day and I would have people sign cue cards. Sign their name, did you like the set, give me your pager number. I will text you and let you know where I would be from time to time.

Tim Ferriss: You were ahead of the curve. They were like index cards.

Jamie Foxx: Index cards, so a box. Gotta get rid of this fly, man. Stop me for a sec. See if we can get rid of this fly.

Tim Ferriss: All right, so picking back up. We took a fly break. I just have to admire this. Because the studio is – what would you say – 30 by 15 feet on the floor and then another 15 feet tall.

And you said I'm gonna stop and get this fly.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, I saw the fly. This is my man.

Tim Ferriss: This is a lot of space. And it took you about seven seconds to track this fly down and kill it. I was very impressed.

Jamie Foxx: You gotta get shit done in here. We don't have time.

Tim Ferriss: So the cue cards.

Jamie Foxx: So I would get cue cards, and like I said, I had a list of about 800 people. I had 600 women because women at that time – this was around '90, '91 – women at that time loved to go to comedy clubs. So it was all the pretty girls because pretty girls like to laugh. You've got eight, nine girls together: Jamie, you're so crazy. And so I had 800 signatures – 200 guys because they wanted to be where the girls were. So I would take that list and also say: okay, now I'm having a party here, here, whatever if you want to come by. So that same list, along with other people that I met as I started to grow in the business, I'd text and say: I'm throwing a party for Puff. This is when Puff had [sings beat].

“We Ain't Going Nowhere” was out. It was popping. Even the LA dudes was like: man, we don't want to fuck with this New York dude but the song was so hot. So I'd text. I'd say: listen, Puff is coming. And the people that I'd text were only cool people.

Like no guys that would be hating. The girls were pretty. Not slutty, but not too tight.

Tim Ferriss: Right, the Goldilocks.

Jamie Foxx: It was [smooching sound]. And so I hit him at 12 noon. I said, “Yo, where you at? We’re at a fevered pitch. It’s goin’ off over here in my little house.” And when he gets there, his mind is blown. He shows up with the entourage. You know Puff, he was like Gatsby. And he walked in and he said, oh, that’s the girl from that show, and that’s the girl on – I said, “Yeah, Puff, we all live out here. So all the people you see are Hollywood, I know they’re my friends.” And so he’s like, “Oh, shit.” So the party’s incredible. We’re playing his music through my little sound speakers.

Everybody's really toasting him. And I said, Puff, the people that are here are different– what the fuck? There’s another fly. I'm gonna stare him down. Goodnight.

Tim Ferriss: Two for two.

Jamie Foxx: So he’s admiring – it’s crazy. And everybody's in tune with him, and I explained to him. I said, “Puff, let me explain to you who you are.” I said, “These are the people who not only live in LA but I think I've found the right set of people who appreciate the art, as well. Because what you do musically and what you're doing on the artistic side is blowing our minds, as well.” And I said, “Therefore, look at the table. I only spent \$400 on the table. There’s Kentucky Fried Chicken – I just put it in a nice bowl. There’s cola; I just put them in pitchers. So no more than \$400 but people are here.

I said, “Because here’s the thing. A fitted baseball cap, New York – fitted – is \$58.00, maybe retail. But Puff, on your head it’s priceless. We just want to be around this fly shit, right?” So we party, and Puff is partying and there’s a dude standing like on the wall. No one’s talking to him. He’s got a little green jump jacket on. Guess who it was? Jay Z. Nobody knew who he was. Jay Z. I said yeah, I know that dude. Missy Elliot has one room, Puff has the other room.

Then I go to my garage to grab some other drinks and I see this tall dude and this little dude. The little guy goes, “You know, B, it’s like this all the time.” I said, “Yeah, what you mean?” “You know, the girls and karaoke.” I said, “Yeah, man, who are you?”

“Oh, we’re the Neptunes. My name is Pharrell.” I said, “Yeah, man, I heard of you. Yeah, man, I like your shit.” So that’s how long ago this was.

Tim Ferriss: Amazing.

Jamie Foxx: So here’s how I make the music play. So as Puff is there, I get people to leave me different bits of music or whatever because I'm trying to get into the music thing.

So I turn that into a show, in a sense, to where I would just have different people I would toast and try to get my music going. So one day, my boy Briam brings in this kid. He has a backpack on. His jaw’s a little busted. His name is Kanye West. And I say, “Yo, who’s that?” They say, “Yo, that’s that new kid, Kanye West. He comin’ on.” I say, “Really, what he do?” They said, “He rap.” I said, “Well, shit, he gotta perform that shit because everybody that comes to my house, they gotta perform.” So I say, “Yo, man, they say you the shit.”

And he was really quiet. I said, “Man, let me hear you rap. You need your beats or whatever?” He said, “I don’t need no beat. Freestyle.” Chopped everybody’s heads off, just amazing. I said, “Dude, I don’t know where you come from but you are going to be one of the biggest stars ever.” And he says, “I actually have a song for you.” I said, “Moi? Me? A song? What you mean?” He said, “I got this song. I want to record it.” I said, “You happen to be in luck because I got a studio in the back.”

So we go in the back and my studio at that time, I call it the Porsche. It was a lot smaller than this. It was really like nippy. It was like a Lear Jet.

Tim Ferriss: It was compact.

Jamie Foxx: It was compact. The sound was toasty. I had engineers from all over the city dialing in so that when real artists come, they don’t think this is just a comedian fucking around; this is some real shit. So we go in and Kanye, quiet but at the same time, he knew what he wanted. He says, “Okay, the song goes like this. She say she wants some Marvin Gaye, some Luther Van Dross, a little – ” I say I got it. I started going – [singing] “She say she wants some Marvin Gaye...” And he says, “What the fuck are you doing?” I said, “Well, see young man, you don’t know nothing about R&B.”

See, I'm an R&B motherfucker. I got to give him the shit. I've gotta put the shit on it. And he goes, really politely, hits the button and says, "Uh, don't do that." I said, "But you don't know what you're talking about." "Uh, that ain't how the song go. You gotta sing it this way."

So in my mind, I'm thinking I'm gonna sing the shit, this song is whack, it's not gonna make it because I'm thinking old school R&B. But he was teaching me the simplicity of hip hop, which I didn't know. I was like, cool guy, great rapper, I don't think it's gonna happen for him. So I go off and do a bad movie. And when I come back, my boy says, "Remember that song you said was whack?" I said yeah. He says, "It's number one in the country" Yule, Kanye and Twister, Kanye's first record. And it was actually Twister's record. I said, oh shit.

So I'm at a club. He says, "You don't believe me?" I said, "No, we're in Miami." They played it. Everybody ran to the dance floor. I grabbed the mike. "That's me, that's my song. I'm on that." That's how I got into the music. Now, the reason the story is significant is because the same brains that we used, that same hard drive that we used, I brought it to this studio. So that hard drive is magical because we also did – just to give you a history on the music, Briam found that song *Slow Jams*.

It went No. 1. And then as we started getting into music, there was a song that Briam brought in. It was 2 or 3 in the morning. He called me and says, "You want to be in the music business?" I said, yeah. He said, "Then wake your ass up. I got this song you gotta hear." So I drove all the way from my house in the Valley to this little studio. He says, "So you ready, motherfucker? Are you ready?" And Briam always says everything three times. "Are you ready, motherfucker? Are you ready? Are you ready?" I say, "Yeah, man, play the shit." So he plays it. And the song was [singing] Blame it on the goose, gotcha feeling loose, blame it on the eh-eh-eh-eh-eh."

I stopped it. I said, "Listen. First of all, please tell me that's my song." He said, "Yeah, it's your song but you gotta record it right now because a lot of people are listening to this song and they don't know if it's a hit or not." He said, "But I know it's a hit." We did *Blame it on the Alcohol* that night. I sung it exactly like the record, which goes way in contrast to my R&B roots.

Because it was out of tune and everything but we wanted to sing it exactly like the demo so we wouldn't lose the essence of it. I don't

want to be like [singing] blame it on the alcohol... you know, so me corny shit. So we did that and then the way we broke that record is that we went from every club – we went to the strip clubs first.

Tim Ferriss: You went to the strip clubs?

Jamie Foxx: We did an East Coast run. Said we're gonna break the record in the East Coast. So we went to New York. My man Packus took us around. And I would go into the club and use my comedic vernacular to get the song up. I said, "Fellows, you ever been at the club, you meet a girl, you've been drinking, you think she look like Halle Berry. You get her back home, she looks like Halle Scary, you know what you gotta do? [Singing] Blame it on the goose, gotcha feeling loose.

Blame it on the eh-eh-eh-eh... Stop the record. Ladies, you ever meet a guy, you get back to the house with him and you've been drinking too much. And you say, 'I usually don't do this,' but you do it anyway? You gotta [singing] blame it on the eh-eh-eh..."

So we took that and we went all the way down from New York all the way down to Miami. This was like 2008. And then the song took off. So long story longer, *Blame it on the Alcohol* was done here, *Slow Jams* was done here. So this studio has that essence to it that you don't throw that away. And just the building itself, Natasha Bedingfield's been here and she's cut. Kelly Rowland's been here, she's cut. The Game has been here; he's cut. Right here on this floor, and I'm sure for you guys listening, I'm pointing to the floor, to the carpet.

A young man by the name of Ed Sheeran slept on this carpet for like six weeks, trying to get his music career going. He came over from London. He heard about a live show that I do in LA. He said, "I really want to do your live show, if it's possible because I have some music that I love." And I hear this kid with this red head and I'm like, do my live show?

It's mostly black, you know what I'm saying? But it's really like music people, like really hardcore music people. They're very finicky. You know, people who have played for Stevie Wonder. I had Miranda Lambert one night. I had Stevie Wonder on stage. I had Babyface. This is the real shit you're talking about. You can come here – I don't care about the London and the accent; you gotta really come with it. He said, "I think I'll be okay." I said, all



right. So I take him to my live night, 800 people there. People are playing, black folks sweating and just getting it.

People singing and they would tear American Idol up. These people haven't necessarily made it. So all of a sudden Ed Sheeran gets up with a ukulele. Walks out onto the stage and the brother that was next to me was like, "Yo, Foxx, man, who the fuck is this dude right here, man, with the red hair and shit and the fucking ukulele?" I said, "Man, his name is Ed Sheeran; let's see what he does." Within 12 minutes, he got a standing ovation.

Tim Ferriss: Wow.

Jamie Foxx: From that crowd. And I said, "Bro, you're on your way." So this studio has, like I said, a lot of history and it has that magic to it, as well.

Tim Ferriss: It's the mojo.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah.

Tim Ferriss: You mentioned getting into music. But it seems like, from what I've read of you, that music in some ways came first.

Jamie Foxx: Music did. When I was a kid, my grandmother made sure that I took piano lessons. You know, that's tough for a little boy in Texas, playing *Fur Elise* and Chopin and Mozart.

Tim Ferriss: We're not talking about Houston.

Jamie Foxx: No, we're talking Terrell, Texas. And I love my city. My city was dope because it was only 12,000 people so it was literally like 12 or 15 families so we all knew each other. But you know, for a little boy playing at that time, the kids didn't understand. Yo, man, why you doing that? My grandma want me to do this. So sometimes I would be belligerent and be like, why you want me to do this?

She says, "The reason I want you to learn classical piano is because I want you to be able to go across the tracks and play your music." For people listening, across the tracks, or on the other side of the tracks for a Southern city, was the tracks in a Southern city separates the city. One side is black, the other side is white. So in our city, the south side of town was where all the black folk lived. The north side of town was where the white folks lived. So she says, "I want you to be able to go on the white side of town and

play classical music.” So she taught me how to play classical piano.

A lady by the name of Lanita Hodge taught me how to play classical piano. And I literally would go on the other side of the tracks and start playing for wine and cheese parties and things like that. But my grandmother took it a step further, too, because she was able to see the future. Here’s a lady with an eighth grade education. She had her own business for 30 years; she had her own nursery school business. She says, “When I say across the tracks, I don’t just mean in Terrell and those people over there. I mean the metaphoric, like across the tracks meaning everywhere in the world.”

She says, “Music connects you to the whole world.” So in doing that, I would connect with people on the other side of the tracks. In Terrell, we were a little bit behind the curve when it came to race relations. Let’s just say it that way. I don’t want to demonize my hometown but there was that, who’s the little black kid? And my grandmother would be like, play.

Tim Ferriss: Do your thing.

Jamie Foxx: And when I would play, a lot of that broke up. I remember even like being armed with just my music in sort of that racial setting sometimes. Like there was a time when there was a Christmas party.

Tim Ferriss: Were these paid gigs?

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, I’d make like \$10, \$15.00. At that time, it was a lot of money. And I played for the church. So playing for the church, I would make like \$75.00 a week

So if you count that up, that’s like \$300 a month.

Tim Ferriss: That’s real money.

Jamie Foxx: That’s real money at 13, 14. My grandmother would take the money, though; give me this money. I say, Grandma, what you doing with my money? She says, you ain’t paying no rent; you’re gonna give me this money. But I remember at that time being armed with just my music. There was a Christmas party that I was supposed to play for, myself and my best friend who was 17. I was 16 at the time. And so here is a little bit of the racial misunderstanding, shall we say. I went to play for the guys. It’s

Christmastime. Maybe it's like December 17th. And we show up. It's two little black kids on the white side of town.

And when he opens his door and he sees these two little black kids, he says, "What's goin' on, here?" I said, "Well, I'm here to play for your Christmas party." "Then why are two of you here at the same time?" I said, "Well, I don't have a license. He drove me. Is there a problem?" "Yeah, there's a problem. I can't have two niggers in my house at the same time." And I was like, well. And I'd been sort of used to the racial misunderstandings. And I said, "Is there any way he can wait outside?"

"He can't wait on the street. Starts at 6:30. You gotta make your mind up, now." So I told my boy, just come get me at 8:30, which was pretty late for kids at that time. So I go in. He says, "Where's your tuxedo?" I said, "You didn't tell me to have a tuxedo." So we go into this room that looks like a bedroom and I'm looking like, why the fuck does he have clothes hanging up in his bedroom? But it was a walk-in closet. I'd never seen no shit like that. We could make a split level condo out of this shit.

So he gives me a Brooks Brothers jacket that had the patches on the elbows. I'm like, oh, shit, highfaloo. So now I'm really playing. But as I'm playing, the grownups were doing racially misunderstanding jokes; I'll say it like that. And my grandmother taught me s at that time.

She said, "When you're in a setting like that, there's a word I want you to remember. It's called furniture." I said, "What's that?" She said, "You're part of the furniture. So you don't comment on what's being said. You play; that's what you're there for. You let these people enjoy their..." And the lady of the house felt bad. She said, "I just want to apologize to you for what they're saying." I said, no problem. She said, "Can you sing something for us?" And I was like, sure, I can sing something. And this was the song that I sung. [Singing and playing piano] "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire, Jack frost nipping at your nose. Yuletide carols being sung by a choir, and folks dressed up like Eskimos." Anyway.

So as I'm singing, I remember watching those white guys – older men, some of them faculty at my school – that had just said something probably not – I don't think that it's that they meant harm, harm but it was –

Tim Ferriss:           They'd have to resign today.

Jamie Foxx:

Yes. And they look and the immediately change. Wow, man, that's good. You know any other songs? And I sang maybe like a six song set. And I saw what my grandmother talked about; that music cracked them in half. They saw a different me. And then afterwards, he gave me \$100.00. And I'm like, shit, call me nigger every day. I've got \$100.00. I'm rich! And what was interesting was I went to give him the jacket back and he's like, I can't wear the jacket. So there was still a little bit of residue leftover. But I saw what the music did. I remember when my boy showed back up, I said, "Listen, it was a cool gig, we got paid but I gotta get outta here because I'm too smart for this. I need to go elsewhere."

And I did. I changed my major. I changed the college that I was gonna go to. I was gonna go to another college in Texas and study music. Instead, I came to California San Diego to study music at a national university. And what was interesting about that was is that being in Texas, it was blacks, whites and Mexicans. When I got to the international university, it was 81 different countries represented at that school, all connected by music and other things; music and sports. And the music arena at that time was high end, straight child prodigies from Japan, child prodigies from China. I had a Russian music teacher and I had a Yugoslavian music theory teacher so it was really across the tracks.

But because of that and because of Estelle Talley and Mark Talley picking me up every weekend to go play music, man, it set me on, like I said, a crazy, wonderful journey.

So the music was first. My college was interesting. I didn't know anything about Jewish, Palestinian, I had no idea. I was at the student center and there was this argument going on. I said, what are they arguing about? Oh, my brother, my friend, they're taking about the Gaza Strip. I said, what the fuck is that? They said, the Jews, the occupation, the this, the that. I got a quick history lesson on that. I got a quick history lesson on people from Argentina or I would see a person who looked black and I'd be like, hey, what's up brother? Bonjour... I'd be like, oh sure, where you from? I'm from Paris. I was like, fuck, they got black people?

So that music gave me not only an opportunity to share but an opportunity to be educated by other people. Because we studied Texas history

And in studying Texas history, it was interesting. If you study Texas history, if it didn't happen in Texas, it didn't happen. So when you look at – this is just a sidebar but when you think about

politics and what people know and don't know in politics, and what they know about across the sea, or what they know about even on the next block, or what they know about what's different in Texas from New York; the reason that politics is so interesting is because the people don't necessarily have educations of other people. Which is why I think that once we start opening up a little more and traveling a little more because what is it, less than 5 percent of America have passports?

Tim Ferriss: It's a small number, yeah.

Jamie Foxx: So anyway, that music, like I said, took me everywhere.

Tim Ferriss: Your grandmother seems like a very wise woman. I've heard you describe her and I'm sure I'm paraphrasing this but she was the bow and you were the arrow.

And she pointed you in different directions. I'm wondering what other – like you were the furniture, right? When to speak, when not to speak. What other lessons did you learn from your grandmother?

Jamie Foxx: My grandmother taught me confidence, as well. My grandmother was a very confident person and very smart, just naturally intelligent. She was a Taurus, natural. She wasn't someone who was super educated or anything like that but she just had a natural –

Tim Ferriss: Like an innate...

Jamie Foxx: I'll give you a hint of my grandmother. I'm ten years old, maybe. I think I'm in the fifth grade; '76, President Carter. The preacher started preaching about homosexuality. I don't know what it is; I'm ten. So he's saying God made Adam and Eve; God didn't make Adam and Steve. It's southern, it's Texas; amen.

My grandmother stood up and said, "You stop that." And the whole church stopped. "What's that, Miss Talley?" "You stop that." Now, her words, what she said next, was very interesting. "Let me tell you something. I've had this nursery school for 30 years. And I want to let all of you know that God makes sissies, too." And the whole place went what? She said, "These little boys that I've watched since they could walk, they play by different music. And you stop that because you're making it hard for them

to navigate.” Sits down. He goes to another subject. Eventually, he leaves the church.

But I found that very interesting. At that time, I didn’t know that that meant until I got to be about 18. I was like, Grandma, what were you talking about? She says, “Yeah, it’s true. I’ve had this nursery school. I see the difference in these kids. And so therefore, I would have these kids come to me after they graduated from high school, gone to college or tried to have a family, although they were living with this.”

So she was the type of woman who had natural intelligence. I said, “Granny, what does it say about religion? Doesn’t it say that it’s wrong?” Being a kid from Texas, that’s a natural question. She says, “You know what I think about it? You have to open up the umbrella of religion.” I said, “What do you mean?” She said, “If you only open up the umbrella halfway, only a few people can stand under it.” She said, “You have to open the umbrella all the way through so God’s children can stand under it because no one here did not get made by anybody else or anything else but God.” So that was my grandmother.

Tim Ferriss: She seems very – the move in church, that was a very bold move, very courageous move.

Jamie Foxx: Very bold. But my grandmother raised those people at church. See, I was adopted at seven months so she was much older. So all the kids that were there – and like I said, there were only a few families that lived in Terrell.

So all of the grownups that were there, she –

Tim Ferriss: She was the matriarch.

Jamie Foxx: Because during the year, it was a school. But then during the summer, you’d drop the kids off at my grandmother’s house and just let her keep them. So she was very powerful in that sense. And then, when I did finally make it, it was wonderful to tell my grandmother to come live with me. So my grandmother was living with me. So we go to the clubs. My grandmother had to be 83 at the time. We’d go to the clubs, we’d hang out.

Tim Ferriss: This was in LA?

Jamie Foxx: This was in LA. I had a little apartment, a split level condo. Remember when that was hype? The split level condo. So I had a

loft. Oh, yeah, Ricardo, he's only 19. He doesn't know what I'm talking about. But I had a loft and we were living in that loft, and then we eventually rented a house. And I didn't know I was a mama's boy. We'd go to the parties, come back, we'd have an after party at the crib. Then one of my homeys came and said, "Yo, Foxx, there's an older lady out here in the front room."

I said, "Yeah, that's my grandmother. What's up?" Then you hear a bottle of champagne pop. What we doing? We getting it or what? You know, so she was amazing, man. So my grandmother, we'd party, hang, have a good time. She was 83 years old. And then the big thing was, I said, Granny, you know it's Christmastime. Why don't we do something we ain't never done? You know, your son's making a little money. Why don't we go to Hawaii for Christmas? Because I've got some friends from Hawaii. "Yeah, well, let's get it going. Gas up the plane."

So we fly to Hawaii one year and it was amazing to be able to show my grandmother another side of the world. It even made the papers in Terrell, Texas. "Estelle Talley on her way to Hawaii." And I remember just a fun time. I remember we were having a good time, we were going everywhere.

And she had a boyfriend at the same time who was 83, too. And he was on the land side. So it's like December 23rd and we called her boyfriend just so they could talk. So she's on the phone, "Um-hmm, yeah, having a good time. Um-hmm, oh, yeah, the weather's nice, um-hmm, sunny. Oh, the food is good. I've got my own seasonings, though. Um-hmm, real nice. Well, I'll tell you what. Look, I'm gonna go but let me tell you something. Don't let me come back there and catch you with no young girls, you understand? Because I don't play that. Don't let me catch you with no young girls, you hear me?"

So she hangs up. It's like three or four families there; we're having a little Christmas party. And we all go, Granny, when you say young girls, what are you talking about? "You know, 60, 65. I don't want him messing with no 65-year-old." She says, "Shit, I'm 83. No sir, I ain't having no 65-year-old woman all in my shit." So she was just a great person, tough girl.

I remember there were some situations where I did make it and some people in my family felt like I should give them all of my money. This lady walks in and we're in my apartment. She comes in and says, "My rich cousin." I didn't even recognize her because I'd only seen her maybe once or twice growing up. So anyway, it

get around to it and she says, “I need \$10,000 for a kidney.” I'm like, whose kidney? “Well, I need kidney surgery,” or something like that. “If you'd give me the cash, I could take it and get the kidney.” I said, “Well, why don't you – if it's a situation of medical, I know some doctors; maybe they can help you.”

“Well, I would prefer the \$10,000.” Okay, I'll hit you. I didn't call. So that became a problem for her. So she called me one day and left on the answering machine, “Young fellow, when's the last time you seen the answering machine?” So I'm checking my answering machine and she leaves this scathing message. “Well, you know what I didn't get the money from you and that's fine because you're not part of this family, anyway. You was adopted. Nobody wanted you anyway.”

This is what this lady is saying to me.

Tim Ferriss: Brutal.

Jamie Foxx: I said, what the hell? So I let my grandmother hear. “Run that back.” [Makes sound of tape rewinding] Played it. “Um-hmm, what's that number?” And she called, and I remember listening. I'm 22 so I'm grown, and I hear how she stuck up for me. She said, “Let me explain something to you, boy.” And I could hear her. “I got the boy when he was seven months old, and everybody wanted him. I wanted him. Everybody wanted him. And he may not be blood but he's our family.” It was just an incredible thing.

My grandmother was absolutely amazing and I think you need people like that. And when you talk about that bow, that's my reference to raising kids. I've got my own kids, now. It's that when you raise your kids, you are the bow and arrow. You're the bow, they're the arrow and you just try to aim them in the best direction that you can, and hopefully your aim isn't too off. And that's what she did for me.

She watched my whole career, all the way up until getting nominated for an Oscar, where all of the things that she taught me came into play. When we did *Ray Charles*, that was an opportunity to play the piano, to be funny, to do an impersonation and all of these things are what my grandmother championed. When we embarked upon that film, I was like, oh, man, Granny was right; this is taking me on the other side of the tracks. Even when I got a chance to meet Ray Charles, because you know, that's my grandmother's era.



And she didn't get a chance to meet him because at that time, she couldn't move, was bedridden a little bit. But being around older people, I understood that muscle too because I was always the young kid with the old parents. So meeting Ray Charles was like seeing my grandfather or seeing one of my uncles.

When I met Ray and we were trying to do *Ray Charles*, the movie, and Taylor Hackford, who was the director, said I've been wanting to do this movie for 25 years; I'm glad you came along because it's the right time. And I remember meeting Ray Charles, walking down his studio. You know, clean, he looked like almost like he could see. And I said, "Mr. Charles, I'm trying to do the best I can to do your movie, your biography." He said, "Look, if you do play the blues band shit, you can do anything, man." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Mister, can you play the blues? Shit, that's what I'm asking you." I said, "I guess so." "Then, come on."

We go and we sit down, and all of the hard work that my grandmother put in, all of the days my grandfather drove me to piano lessons, here I am sitting with a legend and we were like, [playing piano] and I was like playing the blue with Ray Charles.

And as we're playing, I'm on cloud nine. Then he moves into some intricate stuff, like Thelonious Monk. I was like, oh shit, I gotta catch up. And I hit a wrong note. And he stopped because his ears are very sensitive. "Now, why the hell would you do that?" I said, "What's that?" "Why you hit the note like that? That's the wrong note, man. Shit." I said, "I'm sorry, Mr. Charles." He said, "Let me tell you something, brother. The notes are right underneath your fingers, baby. You just gotta take the time out to play the right notes; that's life."

So that was a lesson, that the notes are right underneath your fingers, so metaphorically. So now, you got across the tracks. There's someone like Estelle Talley teaches you, then you got Ray Charles explaining that now that you're across the tracks, what notes are you gonna play? And so now we go on and we do that movie, which we didn't know what we were doing.

We didn't know that it was gonna be like that. It wasn't a studio film; it was independent. During the process of the movie it was interesting, my background being from Terrell, knowing how to mimic. But I needed to know how to do Ray Charles, like the young Ray Charles. So I got in touch with Quincy Jones. And for all of you young ones out there listening, make sure you Google Quincy Jones and Ray Charles. And the reason why you should to

that is because they were the building blocks of our music today, which started in Seattle, Washington, which was interesting.

Seattle at that time was a big hub for jazz music, jazz musicians and that's where Ray Charles migrated to. Running into a young Quincy Jones, Ray Charles actually taught Quincy Jones everything he knows about music. Who was Quincy Jones, for you young ones listening? Quincy Jones was the one who played – he was a band director for Frank Sinatra.

All of those guys, the Rat Pack, all of those guys he was the band leader. When I met Quincy Jones, he talks about that. “Yeah, man, shit, man, music, man, these young cats don't know music anymore, man. Shit, they'd play in the key of Q if they would, man. Shit. Man, when I played baby Frankie baby...” I said, “Mr. Jones, who's Frankie?” “Man, shit, Frank Sinatra, man. Shit, I was young, man. The band, we were playing in Monaco, man. We didn't even have time to rehearse, baby. We were just there playing, waiting on fucking Frank to come in.”

I said, “What do you mean?” He says, “We had to play this show in Monaco. Frank had never met me, knew that I was this young kid who was great with the music. I become the band leader. We don't get a chance to rehearse. Monaco, where there's billionaires and millionaires in the audience waiting on this incredible show.” And he says, “We're just vamping, man, shit and Frank doesn't even come out on the stage. He comes through the audience, man. Shit. Talkin' and shit. I'm like, man, I'm nervous as hell.”

And then Frank got up. He said he sung. The band was tight and Frank Sinatra knighted him, like gave him a ring that was pretty significant. If you know what I mean, and if you guys Google Frank Sinatra, you'll understand what I mean about the [Speaking Spanish]. And so here I am now talking to Quincy Jones. And he's telling me about Ray Charles. He says, “Yeah, man, Ray taught me everything, man. Shit, man, he taught me how to dress. We were wearing zoot suits and shit, then. He had nice suits, tailor made.” I said, “Why did he have nice suits?”

“Shit, man, he was always around women, man, and women would tell him, ‘Man, those zoot suits are ugly.’ Because he couldn't see.” So the women were telling him how to dress. And I said, “Well, Mr. Jones, I'm trying to figure out how to do Ray Charles but I need the young Ray Charles, right?”

And he says, “Well, man, shit. Let me look.” And he gives me a cassette tape. To you young ones out there, a cassette tape back in the day was a way for us to – I’m just messing with them – to share music. And I said, “Okay, I’ve got the cassette tape.” I had to go rent a truck from Hertz rentals because there was no cassette players in the cars. So I popped the cassette tape in. and on the tape was, “Hi, this is Dinah Shore from the Dina Shore show. We have two very wonderful musicians today; Mr. Kenny Rogers and Mr. Ray Charles.” And you hear the young Ray.

“You know what, Donna, I’m just so happy to be here. I’m so happy that you know my music; this is just grand.” And it was the young Ray. Because when I was talking to the older Ray, I didn’t want to grab those bad old habits. I wanted to play him young. So I hear Ray talking young on the tape. And then all of a sudden he’s in charge of the interview and he was just doing his thing. And then all of a sudden she says, “Talk about the drugs, Ray.”

And then he started to stutter. “Well, you know what, I...” So I used that as DNA to play the iconic character Ray Charles, that when he’s talking about his music, he’s fully in control. When he’s confronted with real life things, why are you doing drugs, why don’t you take care of your family, why are you cheating on your wife; he would stutter. And I say this long story to say this. After the success of *Ray Charles*, after being nominated for an Oscar, my grandmother got a chance to witness all of that.

She got a chance to see the bearing of the fruits of her labor. For her young kid, coming from that racially misunderstood town – which I love and wouldn’t change anything in the world when it comes to Terrell Texas – her saying get across the tracks; we’ve now gone across the tracks.

We’ve gone all over the world and now here we are. and think about what are the odds of a kid who lives in a town, population 12,240 people, from Terrell to go all the way to Los Angeles, California, meet Puff, meet all these different people and then actually have an opportunity to win an Oscar? And your grandmother gets a chance to see that. Now, October 23, 2004, she passed away, which if you know, the actual awards were 2005 in February. But she got a chance to hang in there and feel it. My grandmother was just like the blueprint.

Tim Ferriss:

How do you think of teaching confidence with your own kids? Because you’re clearly a very confident guy. Grandmother was

very bold, a very strong woman. How do you try to teach that to your kids?

Jamie Foxx: What you do with your kids, like with my daughter, there is the phrase that when you see Anna Lisa and my oldest daughter, Corrine, I would always ask them, what's on the other side of fear? And they'd be like: huh? I said, what's on the other side of it? Meaning if I stood in the middle of this floor right here and just yelled: ahhhh! What's on the other side of that? Or if I stood in the middle of the floor and went: ehh... what's on the other side of it? Meaning either you do or you don't but there's no penalty. There's no reward. It's just be yourself. So I taught them what's on the other side of fear; nothing. People are nervous for no reason because no one's gonna come out and slap you or beat you up.

You're just nervous. So why even have that? And so that's a building block that they can use not just about the entertainment business, because that's the other thing. You don't have to be an entertainer. But whatever you go into, whether you be a lawyer or a schoolteacher or a tech guy or girl, or whatever it is; there's nothing on the other side of it.

Tim Ferriss: What's on the other side of fear?

Jamie Foxx: Nothing.

Tim Ferriss: I like it.

Jamie Foxx: So it's like – when people say I'm so nervous, what are you nervous about?

Tim Ferriss: Reminds me of this quote that I recite to myself, and I'm gonna paraphrase it because I have it written down. It's from Mark Twain. It says: I'm an old man who's known a great many troubles, most of which never happened.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, exactly. Because all of it is in our heads. When we talk about fear or lack of being aggressive, it's in your head. So not everybody is going to be super aggressive. But the one thing that you can deal with is a person's fears. So if you start early, if they are a shy person, they just won't be as shy if you keep instilling those things.

Tim Ferriss: The mimicry, the impersonation, how early did that start?

Jamie Foxx: As a kid.

Tim Ferriss: Because I read – and maybe you can tell me if this is off or not, because you never know with the internet – that your second grade teacher used to reward the class if they behaved by [00:47:00] letting you tell jokes?

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, they would let me tell jokes. Because I would get in trouble. I think it was my third grade teacher, Miss Reaves. Because I would talk but I was very smart. My grandmother had a school. I lived in a school so I already knew, like first through eighth grade, I already knew all of the lesson plans. So a kid like me, sitting there with nothing to do, I'm gonna get in trouble. So she would let me do standup comedy on Fridays for the kids. And all I would do is my grandmother would watch Johnny Carson and the only room that had the television was my room.

So I had to watch Johnny Carson, too, as a kid. So 9 years old, 7, 8, 9 years old I would just take the jokes that were being told by David Brenner and Steve Allen and a young David Letterman, who else would be on there? Franklyn Ajaye. You guys, when you're hearing this, go Google these guys. A young Jay Leno.

These were sort of like – you know, Richard Pryor. So I would take those jokes and tell them at school because those kids wouldn't watch.

Tim Ferriss: Please tell me you used Richard Pryor on Fridays. Well, I guess it was on primetime so it wasn't Richard Pryor [inaudible].

[Crosstalk]

Jamie Foxx: Richard Pryor on primetime, he couldn't really say anything on primetime.

Tim Ferriss: It was clean.

Jamie Foxx: He was clean. But Rich Little... Google Rich Little because Rich Little was the first person that I saw do impersonations. This had to be like 1976, so fifth grade for me. The joke was Jimmy Carter, who was the president at the time, singing *You Light up my Life*. And at that time, his brother was getting caught drunk all the time, Billy. So it was Jimmy Carter going: so many nights, me and my brother Billy would sit by the window, waiting for somebody to bring some peanuts and beer

So that was my first attempt at an impersonation. And then it went on from there to do Richard Nixon: I am not a crook. Who else would I do?

Tim Ferriss: Reagan? That came later.

Jamie Foxx: Reagan came later but Reagan came in the '80s when I was actually now 21. I was the first black guy doing the Reagan impersonation; probably the only one. So I would be on stage doing my impersonations and going to Ronald Reagan, and people were like: no, ain't no way. "Well, as a matter of fact, well, oh, no, there you go again." And so being young and that teacher, Miss Reaves and Miss Dalfit and all the operational and service excellence teachers – Miss Cole – allowed me to be myself, helped me hone in on what I was going to be doing for the rest of my life. Literally, my friends from Terrell are like, how the fuck did you do that? This is the shit you used to do?

Tim Ferriss: You turned your third grade act –

Jamie Foxx: In the cafeteria! It was literally the same shit. I'd be like, wow, millions of people are watching this shit and it's the same thing. And then as people came up, the impersonation, like Cosby is back in. To do the Cosby impersonation is back in. Don't know how I'm gonna do it but there's definitely a Cosby joke somewhere. I don't know where. But I used to do Cosby. "The Cosby, the people and the Jello pudding and the filth and the fly and the farm," which Eddie Murphy did. But people didn't know that Cosby's real speaking voice is not like that.

Tim Ferriss: What is his speaking voice like?

Jamie Foxx: His speaking voice was different because I remember I got in trouble with Mr. Cosby because he felt that the movie *Booty Call* was not cool. And he said some things in the press about us, and I was a young comedian: damn, man, I'm just trying to work, you know?

But his speaking voice when he was on the phone: "Well, see, the thing is, is when you do something like *Booty Call*, what is a booty call, see? Why are you calling..." You know, whatever. But it was so – it wasn't good. Then you find out that was his shtick. "The Coz and kid and the child and people and the farb..." you know. So I know that will come up. I will find a joke for Cosby that of course is gonna be a little, uh; people are gonna be like, eh, but it's gonna be funny as shit. And now Doc Rivers from the

Clippers: “Hey, you know, we’re gonna – hey, you know it’s not Blake’s fault. You know, next year we gotta do better.” So I’m working on the new impersonations, now. And the way you do an impersonation is musical. Like, say, Kermit the Frog. So Kermit the Frog is: hey.

So it’s sort of like what you do is: hey, here, Kermie.” You know what I’m saying? It’s finding the “heh, heh...” [playing the piano] “Heh, heh, heh.” So the actual voice tone is in the key of G for Kermit the Frog. [Playing piano] “Kermie, Kermie the frog here with the Sesame Street...” And then once you get the voice tone, it’s how you manipulate your mouth to get the sound. Because you notice, heh, heh, heh is sort of constricting. And then it’s asking the character to come sit with you: “Eh, Kermit the Frog, here. Here with the three little pigs.”

But the key is this. [Piano] And at the same time, Kermit the Frog, who else sounds like that? Sammy Davis Jr, a little bit. “Because you know, man...” So now Kermit the Frog is one way but if you just twist your voice, or twist your mouth to the right and grab some swag, now you’re Sammy Davis Jr.

“Kermit the Frog because, man, you know, it’s the same voice.” So that’s sort of like the mechanical way of getting to the impersonation.

Tim Ferriss: So you would start with not the visual, because obviously those people that are listening can’t see this. But the mannerisms are also very much on point.

Jamie Foxx: Mannerisms are important because, like, I do a LeBron James impersonation, which is really not a voice; it’s more of his mannerism. It’s the jaw, it’s the look. “Let’s go. You know, the game of basketball, we just try to – you know, it’s that, you know?” It’s right after playing, when he comes off the court. They catch him and he’s still tired: “You know, you know the game of basketball, we just try to do the best...” So it’s the mannerisms. So people will appreciate the mannerisms first.

Tim Ferriss: The physicality of it.

Jamie Foxx: The physicality of someone like LeBron or like I said, different personalities bring about different things.

Tim Ferriss: When you look back at what Ray said to you, if you can play the blues you can do anything: if you had to translate that for your own

kids, let's just say if you can do X – fill in the blank – you can do anything; what would you put in that blank?

Jamie Foxx:

I would say this. It's a couple of things when you have kids who grow up around Hollywood. If you can stay motivated and if you can not do some things: not be jaded, not be entitled, not be spoiled, not do drugs, not get into all the bad stuff. Because our kids live in an elevated space. So what I try to do – and Ricardo sees this all the time, and so does Justine. We don't play around when it comes to discipline, as well.

Like when the kids are here and all of our friends, the size of the house means nothing to: if you don't do the right thing, you're going to get in major trouble and you're going to get in Texas trouble. You know, like how my grandmother disciplined. It's a different thing when it comes to kids that are living in a privileged situation. Luckily, my daughters are very, very – especially my oldest daughter. My oldest daughter never even asks me for money. Never asks for the new car, never asks for a plane, rides coach.

So I think she really, really has a great head on my shoulders. I remember I got this Rolls Royce, and I went to go pick my daughter up in the Rolls Royce thinking that's gonna be – you know, pick her up in the Rolls Royce, drop the top – drop it; what up, doc? So I'm riding, going to pick her up at school and she won't get in the car. I said, "Baby, what are you doing? Look at the top. It comes off." Bzzz.

She says, "Dad, I'm not getting in that car." Calls her mom, "Could you come pick me up?" I said, "What are you doing?" She says, "I'm not getting in. You're goofy. You make me look stupid in front of my friends." I was like, oh, she's really – and that's something she has on the inside. My youngest daughter is a little different. She wants to ride in the Rolls Royce all the time. "Daddy, let's take this car." We're riding down Sunset Boulevard. She's playing Rhianna with her shades on. So she's a little different in that sense. And I remember telling her, "Analise, we can't ride around in LA in the Rolls Royce with the top down. We're on our way to the Soho House and they're sort of finicky. So I've got to at least put the top up."

She's like, "Why?" I said, "Listen, let me ride until I get to Soho House and then I'll put the top up as we get there." "Okay." So we ride up into Soho House. We're in the valet and all of these



celebs and people are coming out. And she yells out, “Jamie Foxx in the house!” And I'm like, hell no.

I'm trying to pull the top down and all the other celebrities are like, look at this mother fucker being arrogant and shit. He's so gaudy. This motherfucker. And he's got the kid announcing him. So you know, it's a lot of things you could tell your kids. You just have to hope for the best and be there.

Tim Ferriss: What is your birth name?

Jamie Foxx: Eric Marlin Bishop.

Tim Ferriss: And how did Eric Marlin Bishop become Jamie Foxx?

Jamie Foxx: Mann, I was Eric Marlin Bishop, graduated high school in '86. I get out to California and I'm in college doing the music. But I would go up on these open mike nights for comedy. I'd do really well. I could get standing ovations. And then I came to LA, got a standing ovation. And then when I came back every week, I wouldn't get called up. I was like, man, what's going on? But what I noticed –

Tim Ferriss: How does the open mike work?

Jamie Foxx: What you do is you put your name on a list and they pick from the list. They say, okay, these are the people that are going up. So I went up and had a great set and for the next three or four weeks, they never called my name. I said, yo, man, did you see my name? Yeah, you weren't on the list. You were on the list but we've got other people. But I found out that the comedians were actually running the list. So the comedians that had been there for a while were like, we don't want him on here because he's showing us up.

So I was like, fuck. So I ended up going to this Evening at the Improv, the Improv in Santa Monica. I had never been there. So I wouldn't notice that 100 guys would show up, five girls would show up. The five girls would always get on the show because they needed to break up the monotony. So I said, hmm, I got something. So I wrote down on the list all of these unisex names. Stacy Green, Tracy Brown, Jamie Foxx.

And the guy chooses from the list. He says, is Jamie Foxx, is she here? She'll be first. I was like, no, that's me. Oh. Okay. All

right, well, you're going up. You're the fresh meat. I said, what's that? They were shooting Evening at the Improv, this old comedy show back in the day. Said you'll be the guy that we'll just throw up to see if you get a laugh or two. It's gonna be a tough crowd.

Tim Ferriss: Fresh meat.

Jamie Foxx: Fresh meat. I said, cool. So I go up in between two of the guys and get a standing ovation. People are like, who's the kid? Is he on the show? Oh, he's fresh meat. He's an amateur. So then they started yelling my name. Yo, Jamie! Hey, Jamie! But I'm not used to the name. so now they think I'm arrogant. This mother fucker thinks – she's not even listening to us. So I took that name and it stuck, and then I started building everything off of it. Back in the day, people used to wear jackets and put names on the jackets. So I had Sly as a dot, dot, dot, come to the Foxx hole, things like that.

I'm gonna grab a little something to eat.

Tim Ferriss: Sure thing. After a little food break, we talked about some of your comedy, starting in third grade and maybe earlier. We talked about your grandmother. What I'd like to talk about a little bit more is fear. You mentioned on the other side of fear. By the time you got to doing the open mikes, getting up on stage were you nervous? Were you afraid or were you over it?

Jamie Foxx: First, I looked at it. I went to an open mike night and saw the guy and was like, man, these dudes are terrible. So when you go onstage and your whole life is not I want to be a comedian, I went on stage like, yo, I'm gonna just fuck around. So if I hit, cool; if I miss, I wasn't trying to be that anyway. I wanted to do more music.

But when I went on stage, it was just natural; I belong here. So I think that's the thing, too. When it comes to entertainment, there's a certain, like, I belong here, this is what I'm supposed to do. How successful I will be or won't be, that's something out of my hands but I do know this is where I belong. And that's with anything and anybody. When you can sort of listen to that voice in your head or what's in your heart and you get a chance to do something that you really feel like you're supposed to do, that alleviates a lot of the fear.

Now, if it was a surgeon or a lawyer or something that I'm not versed in, then maybe there would be more fear. But with this, I

don't have those types of fears. As I've gotten older in the business, I've sort of simplified things. Like now, I just execute.

I have to ask people like Ricardo, Justine, Justin: what should I execute? So the fear of a celebrity or an artist now is how do I get my art off in a world where it's the social media driven, ridicule and criticism. Like I always say a person like Prince, or a person like Michael Jackson could have never survived in today's world. Because in the day of the internet where everybody has a voice, most of the voices are hateful voices, or not understanding. Like if you saw Prince with a guitar and a bandana and the way he dressed, people would mean the shit out of it. So now it's not a fear but it's just a question that I have to always ask them.

Yo, is this the cool shit to do or not the cool shit to do? And so what I learned is when it's just executing something, when it's either executing a song, or executing a joke, or executing things within entertainment, it's cool. But then you have to wonder how do you get it off? Like even now when you talk about the Bill Cosby joke, back in the day we just tell the joke. Now, you've gotta be like, okay, I've gotta tell the joke in a way that is still funny, that still keeps the bite on it. So those are the different, like for me as an entertainer where there's not fear, it's just like questions. Does that makes sense?

Tim Ferriss: It does make sense, the considerations. Have you bombed on stage before?

Jamie Foxx: Oh, yeah.

Tim Ferriss: Two things. When you are bombing, what is your internal dialogue or response, and then secondly –

Jamie Foxx: The internal dialogue is: boy, you stink.

Boy, you bombing. I only bombed, like, twice.

Tim Ferriss: Do you remember your first?

Jamie Foxx: Yeah. I did this show for this guy named Latimore. Old blues singer. I'm 21.

Tim Ferriss: What was his name?

Jamie Foxx: Latimore.

Tim Ferriss: Latimore. Sound like Voldemort.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, Latimore. So this guy saw me at this other club and said, hey man, Latimore's performing around the corner. Man, why don't you come and open? I said, whatever. I said, how much it pay? He said it pay \$50.00. I say, I'm there. 50 bucks, I need it. So this is like '89, '90. So I get there and I don't know who Latimore is. I just know there's a lot of older people, like I mean old, old. I'm like, oh shit, where the people at? These are the people. So I go up and the setting was different. The chairs and stuff were way in the back. It was like a banquet setting. And it's in the middle of the hood, Crenshaw. And the tables are like from here to where – like 30 feet away from me.

So I don't have that –

Tim Ferriss: You didn't have that proximity.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah. And I hadn't been doing standup comedy that long; I'd only been doing it for like a year. So I had, if I'm funny I've got an hour. If I'm not funny, it's about ten minutes' worth of shit because I would just take a joke and just keep spinning it and spinning it. My first joke they didn't get, second joke they didn't get. I said, shit, I'm damn near out of jokes. So I said, let me do this before I do anything. Let me just talk about people in the audience. So I looked and I saw this guy with this sort of suit on with a butterfly collar. I'm like, oh shit, I'm gonna talk about him with the butterfly collar.

But before I could say that, I looked around and everybody has a butterfly collar. This is what they really want to look like. I just said, hey, man, I don't know what else you all want. Pretty soon Latimore is gonna come up. You guys ready for Latimore?

I'm gonna take a break. So I get off stage and the dude that was washing the dishes takes his apron off and goes, man, I got it. Grabs the mike. How you all feel? And he starts doing these old stock jokes. Kills. And so I say, okay, now I know what it is. You gotta have jokes that are appropriate for your audience. So I learned on how to tell jokes for everybody because at first, my jokes were geared towards women, and were singing, and this and that.

So what I started doing from that day on, I would go to like Des Moines, Iowa, Davenport, Iowa, Boise, Idaho where it's all white; Gunnison, Colorado; all white. And I will go do like 40 minutes of

all black material to see what they understood, what they didn't understand. So if I go to these all white places, and if they understood 15 minutes, I logged that 15 minutes. I can go to any place where there's just all white –

Tim Ferriss: And you would determine if they understood it by the laughs.

Jamie Foxx: By the laughs. Or I would ask, you all know who this is? So I would tell the joke. If in 15 minutes they understood, I can go to anyplace in the world that's all white and they get it. Then I will go to my chocolate cities, Chicago, DC, Florida and do all of my political highbrow stuff and see what the black folks understood. Man, what the fuck you talking about, doc? Now, they understood 15 minutes. Now I've got 15 to 30 minutes or 45 minutes that wherever I go, no matter what age, they'll understand; no matter what gender, no matter what race, they'll understand this 45 minutes.

So I had to learn how to use the formula in order for you to be funny. And then once you got your comedy license, once you've been seen by enough people in the highest way, like if you look at the arc of a Kevin Hart, like Kevin Hart takes that arc, takes the same formula.

I'm not sure how he put it in his mind but he's doing the same thing to where he's going to all of these places all over the world, implementing his comedy. And if they get it, he's gathering all that so that now, when people see Kevin Hart, no matter where in the world, they're gonna laugh. So becoming a great comedian is also having that formula going on in your head because if you paint yourself into a corner, like you're only the black comedian or you're only the Hispanic comedian or whatever that is, then it's hard for you to become universal. Eddie Murphy was great. He had an opportunity to do Saturday Night Live to get it to everybody. But there's definitely a formula to not bombing.

Tim Ferriss: What would you say to yourself – so that was the first bomb. You mentioned two. What was the second? If it's hard to recall, the follow up question is going to be what is the post game analysis when you step off the stage after bombing, say, the second time?

Jamie Foxx: When I bombed the second time was way later in my career when I'm working out jokes. But I don't like to work out jokes and tell people I'm working out. I like to actually do a show, come and do the show.

Tim Ferriss: So you don't tell people you're working on them?

Jamie Foxx: No, no. I think that's cheating and I think you get bad habits. So I do a show in Irvine, California. The first show, I kill. They were just ready for me. I'm like, oh, man, everything works. Second show, bombed. Because I didn't take the time to dig out the jokes. But when you bomb, you go, okay, let's go. Let's check it out. So I've got a team of my guys and I say let's go. Okay, that didn't work. No, you gotta put this in front of that. You're gonna put that behind this because that's gonna kick this off. People didn't know what that was so maybe we don't say that.

When you take the L, it's not like you're not funny.

Tim Ferriss: What's the L?

Jamie Foxx: Like you take the loss. When you take the loss, it's not like you're not funny. It's just like okay, you just didn't put the shit together. So that's the other thing, too. When you do become funny, it's gonna be harder now to make people laugh because you set the bar.

Tim Ferriss: The high water bar.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah. So watch this. The hardest part for Chris Rock was after he had done something great in standup. Because now you gotta top that. The hardest part for Eddie Murphy, because Eddie wants to come out and do standup, is how do I top that in your head. The hardest part is coming for Kevin Hart in the fact that you smashed them. Now you gotta know how to refresh. Because when you do something, like I would look at my stuff and be like, I gotta quit doing that.

Because that shtick that I'm doing, people are catching on and they're like, okay motherfucker, we've already seen that shit. So that's the other thing. You gotta have great material and you gotta know how to move. Because like right now, it's the perfect time for Eddie Murphy to come out and do standup because it's been so long. It's nostalgic. It was 30 years ago. So now, you can catch a new young. You can still excite the older. So being a standup comedian is tough.

You've seen a lot of funny guys not be funny anymore. Why? Because you can't top what you did. You look at a Jim Carrey and you go okay, where you at? Don't give up the funny. Or I always look at Chris Tucker and be like, motherfucker where you at?

Don't leave us. Because being a standup comedian is an interesting thing. Most standup comedians want to look good.

Tim Ferriss: In what way?

Jamie Foxx: They just want to look good.

Think about this. When Eddie Murphy started doing standup, he was funny. But then he started to wear the leather suits, and he was flashy and the rings; they want to look good. Joe Piscopo started working out, with the muscles. So as a standup comedian, we have to be careful not to look too good because people start going like, what the fuck you doing? You ain't cute, nigger. We just want to laugh. But when we start getting into our shit, that's when we lose. Because I did that. My thing was after *In Living Color*, the show that I did, I felt like I had made it. So I wasn't necessarily on the good looking shit but I was on the "I've made it" jokes.

I went on stage and was doing rich jokes. "Just got that Range Rover. Anybody else? It's crazy out here. They're so finicky, right?" Motherfuckers are looking at me like, what the fuck are you talking about? I was talking about, "You know, the square footage of the house, man, when it get a certain square feet, man, that shit is crazy maintaining."

Motherfuckers is like, motherfucker if you don't get off the goddamn stage... I'd lost it. I lost it and I walked off stage and give it up for Jamie Foxx. And I'm thinking they're going crazy. Yeah, yeah, thank you, thank you so much. And I'm standing outside the club and I hear the crowd going crazy. I'm like, what the fuck they doing? I just went off stage; what the fuck are they laughing at? And I open the door and there was a kid, skinny, little tank top on, barely fit. His name was Chris Tucker. He was gonna smash it.

No one has been that funny within 15 minutes. I've never seen – and I've watched them all. I've never seen a standup where people were laughing so hard, like I say he's gonna kill somebody. Like when he says, last night how was it, I killed. It's gonna be true. Somebody's gonna have a fucking heart attack. And I sat down and I went, I can't do that. I lost that. So I left, went to another club that night, bombed.

Like it wasn't – you know. So finally I went over to Okinawa where the troops were and started doing standup over there for the

troops to sort of get it back. It was my Rocky moment. I started running up the steps chasing chickens and shit. [Singing] Trying to get back. And for a standup comedian, that's the one thing you can never let go. You can never stop being a certain goofiness to you. And when you talk about fear and you talk about bombing, it's different when you've done it for a long time.

And when you do bomb, you've just gotta get right back up and you've gotta acknowledge it. Okay, I stunk, man. Because they're gonna let you know. In today's world, you can't do nothing in today's world without somebody letting you know: oh, nigger, you fucked that up.

Tim Ferriss: What are the sources, or where do most of your best bits come from? When you look back at the stuff that just killed, is it the shower, or the thing that bugs you three times so you write it down?

How do you develop your material?

Jamie Foxx: It was observation. You know, I do jokes with them. Just sort of like observation. Early on, it was the black and white things. Black folks do it this way, white folks do it – which was the way we were doing comedy in the late '80s and '90s. Or the average white man's heart, no, it has to do with the heart. The average white man's heart beats like this [sound effect]. Or the average black man's heart beats like this [sound effect]. Lady, that's why you have the choice. Would you rather make love to somebody like this? [Sound effect]

Or would you rather make love to somebody like this? [Sound effect] That was the jokes at the time, so it was observational. And then it was personal. Like you do your observation first, and then it was personal. My grandmother, we lived together. And when she first heard on television what AIDS was, being old, she didn't know what it exactly meant.

She just knew it was bad. But she thought since she's always on me anyway, that I'm gonna catch AIDS. But it was for the wrong reasons. Like she would say, "Boy, it's 6 in the morning. You gonna wake up? Shit, half the day done gone." I said, "Granny, what you mean? It's just 6. Shit, I'm in there sleeping." "Anybody sleep that long got to have AIDS." I said, "Granny, I don't think there's..." "No, I saw it on TV. You're sleeping too long. You got AIDS." I said, "Granny, I don't think that's



exactly...” And then I would use her towels. You know old, southern women had the towel you use and it was a nice towel.

So I used the nice towel. “Boy, I know you ain’t used my towels. You’re gonna put the AIDS on the towels. You don’t use everybody’s towels. Anybody use the towel like that got to have AIDS.” I said, “Granny, I don’t think that’s how...” And this is what she was actually saying. So when I did that joke on stage, people would just die. So it’s observational, then it’s personal.

And then some of the comedians are great politically. I’m not necessarily a political guy. My thing was the impersonation of the politician, like Bill Clinton. “You know, I did not have sex with that woman.” You know, it was things like that. But there’s so many different ways and so many different guys out there that you look at and go: ooh. Like when I would look at a young Chris Rock, the way he used the technicians. Or you look at Jay Leno, or even Arsenio Hall when he would work out. Or you see Eddie working out a joke.

Or watching George Lopez, who knows how to tap into the base and just really bring you into his world. Sarah Silverman, just I mean a technician. Amy Schumer, watching her on Saturday Night Live when she’s working her shit out.

A young Whoopie Goldberg at the Met. There’s so many people you can watch and see how to tap into your own skill set. I try to look at all of them and not steal from them but just get inspired by it all.

Tim Ferriss: Who are some of the most underrated comedians who come to mind, or people you think haven’t had their due, haven’t been appreciated?

Jamie Foxx: I wouldn’t say underrated but I think that were just like warriors that never got that shine. There was a guy named T.K. Kirkland who was a warrior. But he never got to shine. And T.K. had a colorful past. And he’ll let you know. He was a crazy motherfucker. T.K. had jokes, like, “And why does Kermit the Frog always say, ‘Hi ho, hi ho?’ Is he a pimp? And why do fat people wear leather pants? Do they think that shit is cute?

And why do people in wheelchairs tie their motherfucking shoes? Do they think they’re gonna trip?” He was just amazing. And his delivery, you know what I’m saying? He says, “Because I’m T to the motherfucking K. That’s the type of motherfucker I am.

Don't play me, play lotto; you got a better chance." He made himself a character on stage that was just – you know, you guys are too young to know this joke but Bugle Boy jeans? Bugle Boy jeans used to have a commercial where a girl would pull up in a car and say, excuse me, are those Bugle Boy?

She would say this to a guy, like he's walking on the street with his jeans. She says, excuse me, are those Bugle Boy jeans you're wearing? Why, yes they are. And she gets in the car. T.K. had a joke, man, it was so funny. He said, "Man, let that motherfucker be a motherfucking black girl in the motherfucking car.

Excuse me, are those Bugle Boy jeans you're wearing? Yeah. Get in the car, mother fucker." I mean people would just – the dude had so many levels. He's an underground god. Who else? There was a lot of people. Earthquake, amazing. Earthquake is amazing. What's my other dude's name? Tony Roberts, amazing. Tony Roberts, man, I've never laughed – oh, man, I'll have to dig out some of his jokes.

But he talks about – he's very physical but he talks about being on a plane and the plane is going down. And he says he was on a plane and he thought the plane was going down. So he says, so I wanted to fuck everybody before – so while the plane's going down, he's fucking everybody.

He fucked a nun, he was fucking everybody and then the plane leveled off. "Oh, I'm sorry, y'all. My bad." Just hilarious, man. There's so many, so many. Not a lot of new comedians now that are actually as funny, that are actually dangerous now. We don't have dangerous comedians. The dangerous comedian that we have right now is Amy Schumer. She's dangerous.

Tim Ferriss: In what way?

Jamie Foxx: Like she'll say it. Like it'll be hot button, you know what I mean?

Tim Ferriss: Have you ever heard – I saw this guy, actually heard of him through a guy named Evan Goldberg, who is Seth Rogan's writing partner. And so Jarrod –

Jamie Foxx: [Inaudible].

Tim Ferriss: Exactly. That was good. So Jarrod Carmichael. His special, oh, my God. He was like, "I would never make a rape joke; this is more of a rape question." And this is like, oh, my God.

Jamie Foxx: He's funny. He's dangerous.

Tim Ferriss: That struck me as dangerous.

Jamie Foxx: And there's not a lot of that anymore. There's not a lot of dangerous comedians and I think that's where we go sort of like, where's that danger? When you see Amy Schumer, you see, like, I saw her in the room talking about catching a dick in front of Robert De Niro. Like we're at the American Film Awards, whatever like that, and she's just – I mean hardcore dame, which is what Sara Silverman started out as. But Amy looks like she's rounded the corner and is now really making it dope for herself.

Tim Ferriss: If you look back at *In Living Color*, and I watched the show. In retrospect, it seems like such a magical combination of people. How did that group get assembled and what made that team so special? Because you look at the list, right?

You've got Chris Rock, you've got Jim Carry, you've got the Wayans, Jennifer Lopez, you. You go down the line. It's an all star roster.

Jamie Foxx: At that time, Keenan Ivory Wayans, he put it all together. He was able to grab all of these incredibly talented people and make them get along, and figure out how to squeeze all of this talent into 22 minutes of programming.

Tim Ferriss: Short.

Jamie Foxx: It was a 30 minute show so it was 22 minutes. But he's very disciplined in how we make jokes. You were not allowed to come in and be half assed. He'd pull you to the side and say, as a black comedian, you cannot be half assed. You're either great or you don't exist. Don't take the racial part of it any kind of way; that's just the way it is. Because he wrote for Eddie Murphy. He was around the greatest. He says, I'm around the greatest all the time so that's what we're gonna do.

So when you see Damon Wayans come in, and I just got hired. They had already been doing the show for a year or two years. So when I saw Damon walk in, and Jim walk in, it was like fucking Jurassic Park. It was like T Rex, you know what I'm saying? And the way I got on the show was crazy, too. Because it went from – the auditioning process, there was 100 comedians – down to 50, down to 25, down to ten, down to five. I was part of the five but I

was losing. I wasn't doing well within the improve of it because I just wasn't catching the right shit. And then Keenan says something incredible.

He says, "Well, I dig this but I want to see you all on stage doing standup because I want to have standup comedians." I was like, oh shit, that's my shit, that's my shit. And the other four people didn't do standup. There was only one other girl that did standup, God bless her, Yvette Wilson. But the other three didn't do standup so I was like, oh, man.

So that night, everybody's going to the Laugh Factory, which was just starting. Because at that time, the Comedy Store was dominating. And they begged, can we please have the audition in the Laugh Factory? So I show up late on purpose because I wanted top be last.

Tim Ferriss: Smart.

Jamie Foxx: So I show up late and Tamara Rowitt, who was the producer, was like, "What are you doing? You're late. Oh, my God. Why aren't you here? We're supposed to go on early. You're supposed to be first. Jamie, oh, my God, you're gonna kill me." I said, "Oh, damn, can I just go up last?" "Yes, you have to. Because we've already started. Get in here." So going in, this was interesting for me because I was in white world. I was like on the mainstream. I did all my jokes in the hood at that time; I was the hood guy. So I was like, oh, shit, I'm uptown. Everything's clean and shit. Ain't no weed in the air or nothing. Nobody's snuck no drinks in and shit.

And it's an audition. So I'm watching the guys, and God bless them, they just never had done standup before. So I have my cassette tape and I knew what I was coming up to. I'm coming up to Heavy D's in effect with more bounce to the ounce. So I get to do my tape. He says, what's this? That's my tape. I go on with music. You know, up there they didn't go on with music. They just went with a hand clap. I said, no, man, I gotta come in with my Heavy D's in effect and more bounce to the [sound effect]. I need the crowd going. Okay, sure. So he's standing there with the tape and then Sean Williams gave me a great tip.

He walked up and said, "Yo, Jamie, just go up and do your act, man. Just stop worrying about it. Don't worry about the characters. Just do your act. Yo Marla, Marla, come here. Tell Jamie just do your act." I was like, "Oh, really, just do my act?"

Do my act like I do in the hood?” “ Yeah, do your act like you do it in the hood.” I said, “Straight. Cool.” So I go up, they don’t play the music. I’m waiting; oh, you got my music? The dude is over there like this. I said, “Well, I’m supposed to have some music.”

And I said, “If this shit goes wrong, you will actually see me working across the street at the gas station.” And I went into the [inaudible]. Man, I was in there with Keenan and all of them, dog. So I did this little character and I went into my act. And I got a standing ovation that night. I remember seeing Jim Carrey, Keenan, fly girls like on their feet. Oh, man, this is great. And that’s how I got on the show. Now, during that show, I did this character called Wanda. Where I said all the good looking ladies, clap your hands.

And everybody’s like, [clapping]. I said, “Now all the ugly ladies, let me see you make some noise.” It was quiet. I said, “Ain’t that a bitch?” And all the ugly ladies out there are like, hey for real, dog, he ain’t talking about me. So we did this character. Keenan was like, “I want you to do that character on the show because I think that’s where you’ll really flourish.” And when I did that character, that’s when everything sort of changed because I was trying to find my bearings on the show.

Because we got on the show but we were there for a trial basis. But when I did that character, it was like playing football and I was like the punt returner, and I was a rookie and I ran it all the way back the first day. So nobody really knew who I was but they knew this character was slamming. And so that sort of gave me my stripes because these guys were juggernauts. I watched Keenan. I said, “Keenan, these jokes ain’t funny that the writers wrote.” He says, “Get on your feet. Everybody get up. Let’s do this.” He was like, “There’s never a joke that’s not funny. You just gotta work and find it.”

So he taught us the formula of finding the jokes, and he was right every single time. And so like I said, to be there watching Jim Carrey create Pet Detective on set, he’s writing Pet Detective. I said, “What’s that you’re writing?” “Hey, man, just working on some stuff. You know, just got some stuff I’m working on.” “ So what is that?” “ Man, it’s just a little thing called Pet Detective.” I said, “Sounds funny.”

Tim Ferriss: Was he developing it for the show at that time?

Jamie Foxx: For his own shit.

Tim Ferriss: All right, we're back. Took a little breather. Catch us up. What were we just talking about?

Jamie Foxx: We were talking about how nowadays you don't get a chance to control your own narrative. Like we were talking about there's two different people. Some people think the tech world and social media and things on the internet is taking us to a great place. And then there's people who think that it's a horrible place. I spoke with a young lady who had been burned bad, bad by the press. Bad to where she'd lost her job.

And what was interesting about her job was that what they were scolding her about was, like me knowing her. I was like, "You're not like that at all." She's like, "I can't. There's nothing I can do. Everybody thinks so." And they took something like – they went through emails and through her personal emails and all this.

But it was just like, "You're not like that at all." So when I was the phone talking with her, she was like, "They're saying this." I said, "Oh, don't worry about it. You're cool. You're not like that." But I'm bolding. I'm like, I don't even need to read it; what could they possibly say? And when I looked, it was a national story. I went, what the fuck? She lost her job. And so even you'll do something where you think that it's – either you're making fun, or you're having fun but they'll take whatever it is that you say and make it what they want it to say.

Or craft it where – like if you do a joke, it's not about doing a joke anymore. Jamie Foxx slams Caitlyn Jenner. Jamie Foxx trounces – like, no. I'm a comedian. But everything is something that they control. And it's tough because when I say Justin Bieber, what do you think? What's the first thing that comes to mind? Be honest.

Tim Ferriss: Hair that I'm jealous of.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah. But what do you think? Something about a kid who can't get it together.

Tim Ferriss: Right.

Jamie Foxx: When I say Chris Brown, what do you think? It's something negative. When I say Jennifer Anniston, what do you think?

Tim Ferriss: I think of cover of Rolling Stone photograph black and white.

Jamie Foxx: You think Brad Pitt. You think what?

Tim Ferriss: Cover of Rolling Stone magazine, black and white, naked, laying on a bed.

Jamie Foxx: Oh, that's hilarious. But the average person would think of not what they do...

Tim Ferriss: Right, the impression.

Jamie Foxx: What the headline is.

Tim Ferriss: The subliminal image they got at the checkout counter.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, it's the headline. If I say Jennifer Anniston, you automatically think – because nowadays, they control – we don't control our own narrative. They talked about this thing with Quentin Tarantino, which I thought was sad. Because usually, when you see a story about Black Lives Matter, or anything black, it's usually the same black folks with the cool fee who's trying to be heard. And they're absolutely right

It's so much wrong going on in the black world. There's black on black crime. Then there's the divide that because of social media is going on between the police officers and black folk. Police officers on the whole are great folk. I know them. Shit, I know a gang of police officers. But the one or two that have been caught on social media makes it paint the picture that it's all of them. Now, granted, we've known for a long time that blacks and police officers have always had a divide.

We've done movies about it, we've done books about it; it just is the way it is. Now, my take on it, I call it residue. It's slave residue. Meaning it's slavery for 300 years, you saw a person of color a certain way for 300 years. You always saw them as a slave or the criminal or something that you didn't value.

[01:33:00] So therefore, coming out of it, of course there's going to be a divide when it comes to police and when it comes to blacks. It's always been that way. So take that off the table. But in today's world of how do we bridge that gap, I've gone to Quantico in Virginia, saw what a police officer sees. I've talked to police officers to say how can we bridge the gap. I've suggested that you go get a white police officer who you think might not like black folk.

Get that person to go into the hood and throw a picnic for a kid that's 8, 9, 10 years old who's African American so he can see another side of a police officer. Because right now in social media, or in media period, the stories that are the most salacious, where the black guy being killed by a cop, it's hard to erase those images. I'm a black man.

When I see that, I have to react to that. Because I'm like, wow. That troubles me. But then I have to sit down and think. Okay, let me not think of the worse thing to say because I know how media tries to make things, or heighten it. How do I bring people together in spite of the headline? Because what people don't understand is that when you keep showing the images of the black guy being killed by the cop, that does something to you.

That's like whatever you believe in, if it was Jewish person, if it was a gay person; you cannot sit and not be bothered by that. At the same time, that cop, he sees the other side of it. When they're saying, all you guys ain't shit, which that's not what's really being said. Most of the time it's with the individual cop. Now the cop sees the story. In his mind what's the problem?

So now imagine that cop who's watching the story, driving on the street, that young black kid who's watching the story walking on the street. What happens?

Tim Ferriss: Dynamite.

Jamie Foxx: Dynamite. Because we can't get anybody responsible on the media side to say let's stop interviewing people and putting labels on them. Let's interview this man and this woman but don't say that they're Democrat, don't say that they're Republican, don't say that they're a cop; just have them talk. Because when you're watching TV and you see something that you agree with, you agree with them only and you can't hear the other person. That's the first thing. Two, like when I look at Quentin Tarantino, to demonize this guy –

Tim Ferriss: Just because people might be listening to this for years, can you catch people up on the confusion?

Jamie Foxx: Quentin Tarantino, who is a purist when it comes to his opinions and his emotions, even if – I could go to Quentin Tarantino and say I think as a black person, so on and so on. He would say, stop doing that. Stop hanging it just on black. Hang it on things that



are substance, first and then let it be – I've heard this guy speak when there's no cameras. I say, you know what? You make a lot of sense. So Quentin Tarantino sees the Black Lives Matter campaign, sees the individual stories; 40 different people of individual stories where a police officer had killed the person who was unarmed.

It touched him. The reason I thought that was impactful was because you seldom see the white superstar go and stand with the black folk who are just trying to be heard. Even high end black guys don't go stand with the black folks that's trying to be heard.

Especially Hollywood because people in Hollywood are so scared. Oh, they won't see my movie; they won't go see my song if I stand up for anything of substance. They're so fucking scared. So when I saw this dude do that, I was like, wow, that's great. But then the misinterpretation of his words, where he says, "I'm standing here with the murdered." Quentin Tarantino speaks that way. If you've seen any of his movies, he speaks in those terms. He says, "I stand with the murdered.

When I see someone being murdered, I call it what it is. It's a murder. That's a murder where they killed this person." However the story got spun was that Quentin Tarantino is a cop hater. He hates all cops. Now all cops are murderers. And I was just like, here we go again, man.

Here's a person who's willing to put aside his white, cushy Hollywoodness. He could live on his mountain and never give a shit about anything. He came and said, "I felt something." And now, they paint it so bad. You've got the New York cop saying we got something for his ass. Now it's a beef. That's not what we're trying to do. But you can't do anything right now because the media story, if it's not salacious, we don't want to report it.

[Crosstalk]

Jamie Foxx: You feel what I'm saying?

Tim Ferriss: No, I do. And if it bleeds it leads, right? So they put the salacious and the visually viscerally impactful stuff up front because it gets the clicks or the purchases and the advertising. The only, I suppose, flip side to that – and I have a very specific question for you from a fan I'd love to ask related to some of these race questions.

But the good news is, if you can look at it in these terms, is that the necessity for new is so high that if you starve a story of oxygen, it will often die on its own. Because they can't regurgitate the same thing if there's no response. So you can let it kind of die on the vine. We were talking about this before. I've had instances – and I won't bitch and moan too long because I think the question is more interesting than my bitching. But I've had instances where these formerly, I would say, outlets of record, very prestigious outlets – magazines; I'm not going to mention them by name.

Jamie Foxx: I know what your talking about.

Tim Ferriss: But I was interviewed and profiled by a magazine at one point, very, very highbrow magazine. There were six or seven misquotes or erroneous facts in the piece. And I corrected those with the fact checker and it went to press with no corrections. What do you do in that situation, when those things then end up in Wikipedia? So you have to develop a sort of strategy – and this will get even more interesting once we have smart stadiums, once we have facial recognition like you see on Facebook.

Once that's implemented across the board, it will get very interesting. But I'm not going to go down that rabbit hole and instead, I'm going to bring up a question that I'd love to get answered.

Jamie Foxx: But before you go into that...

Tim Ferriss: Yes.

Jamie Foxx: Here's the problem. Back in the day if there was a misquote, and you went to that entity and said hey, you quoted me wrong. Well, we'll release a statement saying that we misquoted you and it erases. The problem with today's world, once it's out there, you can't get it back. You cannot change because it's going to stay there. When I punch up your name, that's the first thing that's gonna come up, or the second thing. You can't get rid of it. When you talk about the regurgitation or just letting it die, you could let it die but the problem is, you have to at least, once it starts, give another – hopefully that you can give another side of it that people may see a little bit.

What's crazy about our society right now, no one wants to see anybody reconcile. No one wants to see anybody come together. When I think about Quentin Tarantino, I spoke and said I back you as a friend and keep speaking the truth, and don't worry about the

haters. Meaning speak the truth from you, not whatever the comment was. But whatever you're saying in your truth, you say that because you ain't out there – you could be promoting your movie. You could be trying to make money. I know the way he thinks. I'm going to go talk to them. If they are wrong in what they're saying, I'm gonna tell them. But if they are right, I'll be the one that can go to the cops and say that.

And now, look at how it is. Go ahead, ask the question.

Tim Ferriss:

I think you're right. I think people want Gladiatorial games and we don't have gladiatorial games so they use the front page for gladiatorial games. But speaking of conflict resolution, this is a question from a fan, T.J. My wife is pregnant and we're moving to a very non diverse neighborhood. We're kind of worried on how it will go. She is black and I am white. What is some advice you can give to a young couple raising a child of color in today's world?

Jamie Foxx:

I'll say this about America. Let's use America as an example. To me, America is the most incredible civilization that has ever been created. Hundreds of years from now, people will look at this place and marvel. There's the bitch and the complaint aisle, where everybody bitches and complains about every single thing. But the one thing about America that is incredible is the evolution of freedom, the change.

When I talk about slavery that happened, 300 years of it; look at the evolution. We came out of it. We have a black president. People are more welcoming now. We used to live in a world, not too long ago, where it was frowned upon, it was tough, it was this. What I would say to people like that, just live your life. I live my life in places where at times, there was definitely racial misunderstanding. But I would talk to that person.

I would make sure that person understood who I was as a person. I'm not going to compromise who I am as far as a black man, but I'm also gonna give you another version of it; not the version that you necessarily see on television, the version that you see on the internet. I'm gonna give you me. And most of the time, we are alike in so many instances.

So when he's saying moving into that non diverse place, it's different, man. I hate to say this but listen to the kids, bro. but when you talk about the kids, the kids today, I'm at the gym last night, 24 Hour Fitness. The kid is playing Future, white kid.

When I first moved into my neighborhood years ago, and I felt like I made it: I'm in the white neighborhood now; I'm here. I've made it. And I hear NWA blasting. I look out there and it was these kids, they were 16 years old. So times are changing, man.

And you have to start giving people the benefit of the doubt that they'll get it right. And for all those people that were here back in the old days and are now 50, 60, and 70 years old, that's dying out. The way of thinking is dying out. You may be looking at a situation where you may have the first female president. It's the evolution of freedom. Think about how we treated women at one point. No voice, no rights, no nothing.

I've heard people say I'd rather have a black person tell me something to do than a woman any day. So we are on the right path. Love who you want to love, be where you want to be because we are evolving. Look at the steps that the gay rights took in the past few years. Man, that's huge. When you're talking about people in the Bible belt and you know how they felt. So if those things are now – my daughter taught me when she was 13. She's 21 now. She was 13 and this was nine years ago and we were talking about gay rights and things like that. And I asked her friends, I said what do you think about it? She said, Dad, we don't think about it. She said, that's you guys.

Tim Ferriss: That's a good answer.

Jamie Foxx: She said that's you guys. That's old people. She said that's why we're turned off from religion sometimes. That's why we're turned off from all these different things because old people argue about where you're from, what you do, what you look like.

We don't give a shit. And so thank God for the youth. Thank God for that couple because what they're doing is they're showing a new world. She said, "Dad if someone was doing something somewhere that was straight, gay, black, white, or brown somewhere else, does it affect you at all? Does your air change? Does anything around you change because the people are living the way they want to live, as long as they're not breaking the laws?" You know what, you make great points. She went onto my radio show and talked about it.

So we are in a new day. What we gotta do, though, like I was telling Justine, we've got to make sure to say let's put media out of business. We've gotta quit allowing them to control the narrative. Those people, like with Quentin Tarantino or the Black Lives

Matter or people that speak up on something that is broken or that is wrong, you don't give them a chance by painting them in a bad situation.

Tim Ferriss: Are you going to do another comedy tour?

Jamie Foxx: Yes, I'm gonna do another comedy tour but I'm gonna start it organically, like maybe 100 people, 200 people, start it organically and just sort of grow it. I've got some great jokes. And that's the thing. When you're a comedian, you have to pray that the jokes will open up. So I've got some great jokes that people will get and understand. And then just the stuff that's been going on with me, you know, getting older, not realizing you're the old G. You know, like the young hip hop guy: what's up, old G? Man, that's right. It's just some funny stuff. And any comedian would tell you that it's hard to be funny when there's nothing funny happening.

But there's been so much funny shit happening. Like my mom, who gave me up for adoption at seven months and she comes back to live with me, and now she's living with me.

The first day she's here, she walks down the steps and says, "I want a Phantom." I'm like, bitch, of the opera? What are you talking about? She's talking about a Phantom Rolls Royce, right? And it was just funny. Just certain things, the fact that everybody lives in my house. The fact that my mom, my dad, my two sisters live here. My dad still dates. And my mom is going on his side of the house when he has a date, just assessing, like just being in the way. Like, oh, hey, I didn't know you had company, George. And now they've turned into kids. My dad will come to my room: could you tell her not to come on my side of the house when I've got a date? And I'm like: now, parents. So you know, it's funny things that happen.

Tim Ferriss: Lots of organic material.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, it's organic, man. So we've got funny shit.

Tim Ferriss: When you think of the word successful, who is the first person that comes to mind and why?

Jamie Foxx: On the bigger picture, because I witnessed this in 2008, to see President Obama become president, to me – 2008, not talking about after he became president because everyone will have their views on that. I know what it meant to me. To see him stand up

there, put his hand on that Bible and become the president of the United States, that is success in so many different ways. And also it jars you, for every person that says just because I'm black... Maybe you can't use that all the time because this man now shows you. And whatever side you end up on, because it's not a political thing, to see that – and the reason why it means so much to me to see an African American man do that, and literally when he was – this was interesting. This is how we're connected.

When he was 30 points down for the nomination, 30 points – no one knows who he is – I get a call from Oprah Winfrey. “Hi, Jamie Foxx. It's Oprah. Hi, Jamie.” I was like: what's going on? “There's this guy named Senator Obama; I think he's gonna be the next president.” Then I got a call from Norman Lear. “Jamie, it's Norman Lear. The senator's on fire.” I said, who is he? “Senator Obama but he's 30 points down so nobody knows him.” The reason they're calling me is because we have a radio show that was reaching everybody, especially the huge urban market. So I go on my show and I say, “I'm voting for this guy named Senator Obama because he's black.”

And I go to commercial. When I go to commercial, my phone lines light up with all black people saying that we will not vote for this guy just because he's black. Don't treat us that way. So we ended up educating everybody about him. He gets the nomination and he goes on and he wins. And to me, it was all odds against him. And I thought that type of success, regardless of where you come from, whatever side you stand on, to me, that was something monumental.

When we talk about where this country has come from, when you talk about the greatness of America evolving, and evolving to that type of freedom and him taking advantage of being in America and becoming president, to me that's success; that he redefined what it is.

Tim Ferriss: What historical figure do you most identify with?

Jamie Foxx: Who do I identify with historically? When it comes to entertainment, Sammy Davis Jr is a person that I look at all the time. I go on the internet and watch him play the drums, watch him sing, watch him dance, watch him do jokes, watch him do a movie, watch him spin guns. To me, he was just the ultimate entertainer.

Tim Ferriss: He was a full stack entertainer, as one engineer said. That's what somebody called you, meaning he had all the tools in the toolkit.

Jamie Foxx: Oh, man, it's great. There's other sides of me, too. Like the sports side, like I was the Magic Johnson. You know, the person who loved being competitive but also wanted to get everybody else involved in the way he played basketball. When it comes to social consciousness –

Tim Ferriss: May I interject for a second?

Jamie Foxx: Yes.

Tim Ferriss: This might seem like a funny question but do you feel like you identify more with Magic Johnson than with Kareem Abdul Jabbar?

Jamie Foxx: Yeah. The reason I feel more with Kareem Abdul Jabbar was because Magic smiled and was fun; he was happy. Not to see that Kareem wasn't but Kareem was a more serious guy.

Tim Ferriss: Very serious.

Jamie Foxx: If you ever met him, he was completely serious. I'm more the fun dude; let's have a good time. When it comes to social consciousness and social issues, that's where I draw from a lot of different people.

I think watching Martin Luther King and going to Atlanta and seeing what he did and how he did it when he did it, when I look at the bravery of him, it's beyond. Because I look at social issues today, how we're so afraid to step out on anything. Like: oh, my wealth and my money... not to say that I've thought this way all my life, like literally it just happened not too long ago where I was like, we've got to step up more socially. We've got to be more socially conscious, even if some of the people say: oh, fuck it; I ain't going to your movies.

Okay, fine; you weren't gonna go anyway. But we have to step up a little bit more socially. When I went to see where Martin Luther King came from, and what he did, and how his house was, he actually came from middle class, big, nice house. But it was right across the street from poverty and it sort of taught him how to deal with other cultures. Taught him how to deal with other financial groups. He said: I don't want to see people hurting. I want everybody.

So I think like that. I've always thought, even when we talked about earlier, the Jews and the Palestinians in the student center, the rest of the story was I befriended both of them and we all became friends. Because I called myself spackle, which is the stuff that goes in between the bricks.

Tim Ferriss: Between the cracks, yeah.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, I'm spackle. I get along with all religions. I get along with all people and try to bring them all together. So when I think about it socially, it is the Martin Luther King thing. Because I think sometimes we overlook that the world is big enough for all of us to live on. It's big enough for all of us to get along. Sometimes I question why is it so tough to get along, which is what Martin Luther King questioned. He said I just don't get it and I won't stand by. And like I said, I've only thought about it like that in the past few years after watching Harry Belafonte go on stage before I was supposed to get a lifetime achievement award

He goes on and says something so prolific. They were talking about violence and he said, "The violence that's happening in America is mostly black violence and you black entertainers sit here mute and we laid all of this groundwork down for you guys and you guys are disrespecting it." So that's the one reason I said I think more socially.

Tim Ferriss: I mentioned Kareem Abdul Jabbar because I saw, just by chance, a fantastic documentary called *Minority of One*. And it's so good. It detailed in particular – and I'm not at all well versed with basketball so it was also a glimpse into that world for me – but his relationship with Magic Johnson, which was fascinating. Do you have any particular favorite documentaries or movies that you just feel are must watches for human beings? And I know that's a big question.

Jamie Foxx: I think documentaries on cultures are important.

If you get a chance to see any documentary about Jews and what they went through, watch it. Any documentary about Palestinians and what they've gone through, watch it. Blacks and what they've gone through, watch it. Women and what they've gone through, watch it. The reason that I say it is because if we're talking about the human aspect of it, like I didn't get it until I watched – it was actually *The Pianist*. And I just went: shit, I didn't know it was like that. I didn't know that. And then when I listened to some of



my friends who lived in the Middle East and they're going through those things. I said: shit, I didn't know it was like that.

So I think any time you get a chance to watch people and where they come from, or a culture and what they went through, you could even look at the 13 colonies breaking away from England. You go: oh, shit, I didn't know you went through that.

So it's like when you do that, you come away with a sense of, okay, I get you know.

Tim Ferriss: Right, it helps build your compassion.

Jamie Foxx: It helps build your compassion because you only live in your own world. And unless you get a chance to see what it is, a lot of times your views will be narrow and just watching documentaries like that to open up your views are just amazing. When you look at a story of slavery, there was a book that I just showed these young guys called *Without Sanctuary*. It's a book where a photographer went around in the South during the times of slavery and documented lynchings. And he would document the lynching and make postcards. Because at that time – see, we go “oof,” but at the time it was commonplace. It was a party. So people would get their food – that's where you got picnic from.

They would get their food and drinks or whatever and they would go down and watch the lynching. And so there was a postcard that said: here's the lynching of nigger Charlie, hope you like it, hope everything's well. So that was something that was mind blowing because it was commonplace. Like I said, when you get a chance to see cultures and history, you understand what's going on today. This is a last little factoid. If you get a chance, pull up the Harrison Act. The Harrison Act was an act about taking drugs off the street and making them illegal.

Because at the time in our culture, we were able to use whatever drugs that were out there and available. But the government didn't know how to get it off the streets. So they ran a story, “Black man gets high on cocaine and fights cops.” And people were like: so we gotta get rid of drugs. People were like: fuck that. Don't get rid of our drugs, get bigger guns. Give cops more jurisdiction. Finally, they ran a story, “Black man gets high on cocaine, rapes and kills Caucasian woman.”

That's when the Harrison Act – because we don't want that. But because of that Harrison Act, with the jurisdiction of a cop, that

plays into a little bit of what we're dealing with today. Because it was sort of set that way at a time where it was commonplace to see slaves. It was commonplace to see blacks as second or third class citizens. And it's not to incite anything; it's not to make you feel anything angry. It's just a peering into someone's genesis to see where we are today so that you can understand or try to have the compassion for all of us who live here in this country. Because like I said, it's the best in the world.

Tim Ferriss: And beyond. I remember a friend mentioned to me, I was watching *Planet Earth* and he said there's a companion of some type which I really want to see. I think it's called *Humans of Earth*, and it actually profiles different civilizations, differentiate cultures around the world.

And it shows you how humans have adapted; Mongolians using falcons for hunting and whatnot. Yeah, I totally agree with you. I think if a culture is a set of beliefs and behaviors, you have to, in a way, be taken on that sensory experience to develop that compassion. You don't get it through text alone, necessarily. If you could have a billboard anywhere, what would it say?

Jamie Foxx: Man. It would constantly change. It would be those new billboards.

Tim Ferriss: Oh, that's a sneaky answer. I like it.

Jamie Foxx: It would be a billboard that changes. Ball out, doc. Have a great time. Go to church. Love somebody. Teach somebody. Get angry a little bit. It would just change. You know, these guys know me. I'm all about having – and at the end of the last one: have as much fun as you can.

Because in a blink of an eye, we'll all be gone. 100 years compared to infinity is nothing. I talk to my sister all the time. [Inaudible]. What's wrong? I said: girl, you better start having some fun; we're gonna be gone in a minute. You're gonna look back and say, shit, I should have been laughing and now I'm dead. Yeah, my billboard would change constantly because I think we all change.

Tim Ferriss: You said get angry a little bit. I remember I was given this advice by a guy named Po Bronson, a writer. Many, many years ago, I asked him at an event. I was sitting in the crowd. I said, "What do you do when you get writer's block?" He said, "I write about what makes me angry." If you were teaching a ninth grade class, mixed

race, mixed gender, what would you teach? What do you think the most important things, skills or otherwise, that you could teach ninth graders might be?

Jamie Foxx: Like I said, it would have to be different tiered.

If it's a ninth grader of today, I would teach him as much as you can and interact with actual humans. The toughest thing in the world is looking at my daughter, and we're in Paris and –

Tim Ferriss: Generation of thumbs.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, they're on their cell phones. So I say as much as you can, interact with people because people, it's the best interaction because there's all types. And there's discretion when it comes to people. Like there's no discretion when it comes to thumbs and what you can say on the internet, and that's why you get drug down by it. Because it doesn't take anything. If it's an anonymous person and they say you're ugly, or you're this or you're that, there's no discretion there.

So they can sort of get the venom off. If we're in a surrounding and I may feel something about something but I won't say it because I don't want to hurt somebody's feelings; I don't want to have them hurt my feelings. So that's the one thing. Interact with people.

The second thing is interact with people from all over the world. Because you become narrow when you're just all about my block. And just being about your block in today's world is going to hurt us. Because people don't understand global. We don't understand global market, we don't understand global things. That how does something in the Middle East affect me in North Dakota? Because of the way we're set up like this. It's like you have to get the education.

I would bypass – no. I wouldn't bypass anything. Get the education of people over the world and then the last couple of things would be history. Know your history. Know why we're here, why this – especially when it comes to rules and legislation and things like that. Know why we vote, why we don't vote.

If you think about it, this wonderful country runs just like a human brain. We only use a little bit of it when it comes to the voting market. You've got to vote. Get out there and be active in that. A lot of times we're just: hey, man, whoever's the president is the

president. So that. And the last two things I would teach is hustle: teach your hustle. Your hustle muscle is the most important thing.

When you hustle and you go get it, a lot of times that alleviates your problems. When you don't hustle or you leave it to chance – when you leave things to chance and you didn't give it all that day, now you start to argue or wonder about things. Bills: fuck, I gotta get that done. Oh, my relationship, how did it...? But if you hustle, for one, it's gonna take up a lot more of your time so you don't have time to concentrate on just –

Tim Ferriss: The worrying.

Jamie Foxx: The worrying. If I put the work in, I've got my check. And your check doesn't have to be monetary; it can be anything.

It could be I put the work in at the charity and this happened because of the charity. But whatever it is, put that hard work in and now you can see things coming from wishing, and that takes 70 percent of your worrying away because you did give it your all. And then the last part of it is, reflect. Sit still for a minute. Because when you are working, working, working, that will strain you as well. So you've got to be able to decompress. You've just got to be able to chill whatever it is that you chill with.

If it's your home, if it's your friends, whatever; take time out to be like, you know what? If it's out of my hands, it's out of my hands. I'll get a better crack at it tomorrow. Colin Powell said something incredible. He said: I always feel like in the morning, I've got a brand new chance. And I'm paraphrasing. He said: I love getting to the morning because it's a new opportunity.

But really take that time for yourself. Relax, chill, whatever it is that you believe in. if it's God, Buddha, Allah, Hindu, all of them; whatever it is that gets you on that I did what I'm supposed to do, let me relax now, then tomorrow get another start.

Tim Ferriss: What does the first 60 minutes of your day look like? Do you have any morning routines that are important to you?

Jamie Foxx: Morning routines? I wake up, I text the people that I dig and love.

Tim Ferriss: What do you say?

Jamie Foxx: I just send them encouraging – people that just really mean a lot to me, I want to let them know I'm thinking about them, the whole

nine. And then it varies, man. Sometimes I'll be like – I put some work in. So I put in eight days. So maybe these two days I can chill.

On the physical part, I get my 50 pull-ups in, 100 sit-ups, maybe 100 crunches and it's easy. I used to not be able to do it. My boy Tyrone –

Tim Ferriss: how many sets for the 50 pull-ups?

Jamie Foxx: For the 50? So I do 15 first, 15 pull-ups. This is what it is. I do 15 pull-ups, 50 push-ups, 100 sit-ups and then I go back and I do 15 different grip.

Tim Ferriss: Oh, chins.

Jamie Foxx: So that'll get me to 30. Another 50 push-ups, that gets me to 100 push-ups; I'm done with the push-ups. And then I do 10 and 10, back to the first grip. And you don't have to do it every single day; you could do it every other day. And then what you notice is the pull-up bar, and Tyrone kept telling me this. I've got a home – Tyrone, Caine in *Menace to Society* and I kept wondering how was he always in shape.

He said: man, I'm trying to tell you, the pull-up bars are everything. So that, and make the calls on what I need to get done, and make sure I'm in the right position and get the kids –

Tim Ferriss: Do you drink coffee?

Jamie Foxx: I don't drink coffee. I had to stop.

Tim Ferriss: Oh, you stopped?

Jamie Foxx: I had to stop having stimulants.

[Crosstalk]

Jamie Foxx: Earlier in my career, I was all about the stimulants. So at a certain point, I had to –

Tim Ferriss: Ix-nay on the affeine-cay. Yeah, I've been cutting that out, as well. People are like: aren't you worried about depressants, alcohol? I'm like: no, stimulants; that's what I need to be worried about.

Jamie Foxx: Because what I tell people all the time that drink coffee is after awhile, you keep hitting that same muscle in your brain to where – I know people right now who could drink four cups of coffee and go to sleep.

Tim Ferriss: I used to be that person.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah. And one of my boys loves the Red Bull.

And he won't understand why some days he'll just be like this. And it was tough because I had to have coffee every day and I drank double espressos. I was like, I had to have the up. But now I know how to go get it inside.

Tim Ferriss: Last question, here. I'm going to ask what advice you'd give to yourself at three different ages: 20, 30 and 40. So what advice would you give to your 20-year-old self?

Jamie Foxx: Man, put the condom on. Shit. Stop playing around.

Tim Ferriss: Important advice.

Jamie Foxx: You're 20, man. Put that on, buddy. And not the fishnet one, either. Put the real one on.

Tim Ferriss: Anything else for 20 or should we move to 30?

Jamie Foxx: I had my daughter at 26 so the advice I would give me is like calm down.

Calm down and just make sure you're paying attention to your daughter and to the daughter's mom. 20s was tough because I'd just gotten to LA. The whole world was opening up. I'm like: man, I'm trying to do all of it. I was like: calm down. And luckily it was 26 so moving into 30, I was on my way to comedy, if that makes sense.

Tim Ferriss: It does make sense. So then you hit 30. What advice would you give your 30-year-old self?

Jamie Foxx: It's gonna go fast.

Tim Ferriss: In what way?

Jamie Foxx: The time is gonna go fast so just make sure that you start now planning for your future. And not only is it gonna go fast, but don't spend all your money. Don't buy the jacket that's \$12,000

You know, relax. Just relax because – and 40 is gonna come so fast. And you don't think that it is but it's gonna come so fast.

Tim Ferriss: And would you say that because you'd want your 30-year-old self to pay attention to the present moment, or do long term thinking, or both?

Jamie Foxx: Do long term. When you're 30 and you've got a kid, and you're in my business – and in any business – all businesses, especially when you make – my business is about me so I have to be careful in my decisions socially and plan for the future. I remember doing my television show, and it went five years and it went fast. And I would tell the people on my television show: it's gonna go fast. And if you finish at 35 but you live until 70, you have to really think about the future.

Tim Ferriss: The long game. And then 40? The big four-zero.

Jamie Foxx: Wow, 40. There are gonna be tough decisions that you have to make when it comes to business. Because when you're 40, in my business, the window is closing on certain things. So you have to be able to open those windows to other things. And some of the people that you've gone to battle with until you're 40 may not be the ones that you will battle and do business with towards 50. And take a little bit of your personal feelings out of it.

Because I'm very personal, meaning I would stay with someone even if I feel that they're not up to par business-wise but we have history. Take a little bit of the personal out of it. Still remain friends if you can with this person because now it's really pending. Like 50 is about to be here.

I would tell my 40-year-old self: grow up in your mind but not in your body, necessarily. Meaning stay young in your body but certain parts of your life, you have to grow up and be grown about things. Because now you've got another kid, your other child is 21, now, which is just this past year. But she was 13, 14 when I was 40. But now you've gotta start living. You can always live your life 100 percent for you, but now that you have your kids and they're a certain age, it's gotta be 30 to 40 percent you, 60 to 70 percent what you're gonna leave from them and how you're gonna leave them. Because like I said, it's flying. And that's it.

Tim Ferriss: Jamie, so much fun. I really appreciate taking the time. Where can people find what you're up to, find you online, learn about your projects?

Jamie Foxx: You can find me at IamJamieFox on my periscope – am I right? Am I saying this right? I've got these young kids telling me what to do.

Tim Ferriss: And then IamJamieFox on Twitter, also.

Jamie Foxx: IamJamieFox on Twitter and I'm trying to do better on Twitter. An old fellow trying.

Tim Ferriss: And the latest album?

Jamie Foxx: The latest album is called “Hollywood, Story of a Dozen Roses.” I don't care how you get it. You can download it, bootleg it, steal it from a friend, I don't care; I just want you to hear the music. The song that's out right now is “I'm Supposed to be in Love by now.” [Plays piano, sings] “I'm supposed to be in love by now. It's been so long for me, I don't know how. Been drowning in the sea of broken vows. But I'm supposed to be in love by now.

I've been chasing my dream, now I'm chasing you. Running hard but my legs feel weak. I done played every part, I done played a fool. Write the movie, I'll be your lead. I'm supposed to be in love by now. Well, girl, you stole my heart; take a bow. In love by now.” So make sure you get that. “In Love by Now” is out. It's a song that my daughter sort of made me do.

She's like: listen, stop with the club stuff. My oldest daughter is 46. Stop with the club – you're trying to be too young. I had some shoes on one day that she thought was just – I had too young of a shoe. She's like, “Dad, what is that on your feet?” I said, “They're the new style, baby. They're the Giuseppes. It's the new style.” I had a zipper on and a buckle with my name engraved. She was like: stop it. She said, “Dad, you have old feet.” I said, “What does that mean?” “You have old feet, like you have feet for marching, like the civil rights. You have civil rights feet.” But she said do a song that we know that it is from you and it's true.

I'm supposed to be in love by now so that and “Jumping out of the Window,” and we just shot the In Love by Now video with George Lopez as the priest. I get stood up at the alter. George Lopez is the priest. Nicole Scherzinger – and we all know here from the



Pussycat Dolls but also her solo career. She plays my love interest which is great because she's a good friend and so we were able to really get into – you know, they don't do old school videos anymore.

This actually has a bit of a story. My man Tank is in it, and all of my friends. My daughter's in it, my little daughter and my mom and dad are in it so it's kind of cool.

Tim Ferriss: I was jamming to Babies in Love. That's the type of music I like to listen to when I'm headed somewhere to write, sit down and do some creative work.

Jamie Foxx: Yeah, babies in love. [Singing]

Tim Ferriss: Solid.

Jamie Foxx: I think Justin Bieber is supposed to do that song, first and we were lucky enough to get it. "Babies in Love," "Kid Ink" is on there so we've got some good stuff going. Later on, "Sleepless Nights" will be on at some point and then we'll start work on the Mike Tyson bio and that's it. And then the standup comedy is coming because like I said, I've got a lot of stuff I've got to get off my chest and that's it.

Tim Ferriss: Since you brought up Mike, what would Mike say if he were here right now?

Jamie Foxx: I'm gonna say it like this.

Because now that I'm about to do the movie, to do the Mike Tyson impersonation would be a little disservice. What I will say is I met Mike when I was 21 years old. I went on stage and I was doing my joke and I was getting to my Mike Tyson joke, and I went into it and no one laughed. Because Mike was in the audience. The guy was in the audience with Mike and said, "Yo, Mike is in here, motherfucker." I was like: oh, man. The black girls in the front were like, "Watcha gonna do, Jamie? You gonna tell your jokes? You scared of Mike Tyson?" This is when Mike Tyson was knocking people out for nothing. And then the guy yells out, "Mike said do the joke and that shit better be funny." I was like: oh, shit. So I do the joke, it's a standing ovation.

I come off stage and Mike goes, "There he is. I want to talk to you. You're so funny. Come hang out with me. You're funny, motherfucker. Grab something. Come on, get in the car with me."

And we take off and I started hanging out with Mike Tyson at 21 years old. It was the most incredible thing in the world. Mike was bigger than Michael Jackson at that time. He was the biggest person, biggest star in the world. Mike would be in a club, see a girl and say, “Hi, how are you? You like BMWs?”

They’re like: huh? “Do you like cars?” Shit, yeah. He would go open up the BMW dealership and he would buy a car for a girl. That’s how dope he was. And then all of his boys would go to all the different cities and pick up the cars that he bought for girls and say, “Y’all, come on, give the keys back. You know he was playing.” So it was great to see him during that time and it was tough to see him when he went through what he went through. And then when we finally decided to do this movie, this is the Mike Tyson that I think people really will be able to grasp.

Is that when we show Mike Tyson older, and I call Mike and I say, “Mike, how are you?” “Oh, I pray this to Allah my brother. I’m happy, how are you?” I say, “I’m good, Mike. You know, what’s up? What’s going on?” “ I’m just happy. I’m happy because I don’t have any money anymore so I’m happy.” I’m like, “Mike, what does that mean?”

He was like, “No, it’s just that all the vultures that were around me the whole time, you know, they’re always after my money. I don’t have any money so nobody wants anything from my so I’m just so happy.” And if you notice, his speaking voice, like what I told you with Bill Cosby, is completely different from when he’s on stage, when he’s getting ready to fight.

So he was like, “I’m just so happy.” And I could tell, I said, “Mike, that’s the person we need to tell. That’s the story. We always see the person that rises to the mountaintop but we don’t see the other side of the mountain and all the jagged edges and all the things. And you’re about to slip off of that mountain.” So Terry Winter, who wrote *Wolf of Wall Street*, *Boardwalk Empire*, and Martin Scorsese, who’s going to direct it, who hasn’t directed a film about boxing since *Raging Bull*.

So fingers crossed. If it all goes together, we’ll be able to see Mike Tyson in a different way and we’ll be able to transform to where I want to be so good as Mike Tyson that I look so much like him that when I walk up to his house, his kids will acknowledge me as their father. And then I want to be able to sit back and reflect. And here’s what I’m trying to do with the career, is establish characters.

*In Living Color*, it was Wanda. “Hey, for real, doll. I’ll rock your world.” Then it was Willy Beaman in *Any Given Sunday*. “My name is Willy. Willy Beaman, I keep the ladies screaming.” Then it’s Bundini Brown from Ali. “Muhammad Ali is a prophet. How are you gonna be God’s son? Soon as you come out the garage, you be number two.” So Bundini Brown. And then it’s: “Well, I got a woman way over town that’s good to me,” and it’s Ray Charles. And then it’s “Django, you know they love him very well. Django.” The Django experience, working with Quentin Tarantino, which was mind blowing to be able to go in and read for that. I didn’t know about that part. I thought Will Smith was gonna do it and I was like: whoa, Will Smith and Quentin Tarantino, this is gonna be incredible. It didn’t work out that way.

I meet with Quentin Tarantino. I told him I understand the script and I said not only that, I have my own horse. And so I ended up riding my own horse in *Django*. I knew that was gonna be another character that’s gonna change the game. So they’ll look at that and they’ll say Django. And hopefully, if everything goes right, Mike Tyson will sit with those characters. So that you’ll be able to, after awhile, look at a career where you transform into a character, people know it, and were moved by it and hopefully, if it all works out, it’ll be a great opportunity to look back and see: wow, look at the things that you were able to do in America.

Tim Ferriss: That’s an incredible cannon already and my brother gave me Mike Tyson’s autobiography for Christmas last year. I sat down and I read it because when I was a kid, I would watch on the grainy VHS, Mike Tyson’s Greatest Hits over and over and over.

And you’d see his reception in Japan. He was the biggest star on the face of this planet. But you read the autobiography and there are layers upon layers.

Jamie Foxx: A guy who just wanted to be in love. It was more simple than we thought it was.

Tim Ferriss: Yeah. I can’t wait to see it. I hope it comes together.

Jamie Foxx: I hope so.

Tim Ferriss: Jamie, you are the consummate performer and entertainer so please keep creating.

Jamie Foxx: All right, man. Thank you.

Tim Ferriss: This has been such a gift. Thank you for your time.

Jamie Foxx: Thank you, buddy.

Tim Ferriss: And for everybody listening, you can find all the show notes, links to everything at [Fourhourworkweek.com](http://Fourhourworkweek.com), forward slash podcast. You can search my name and Jamie's will probably pop right up. And as always, thank you so much.